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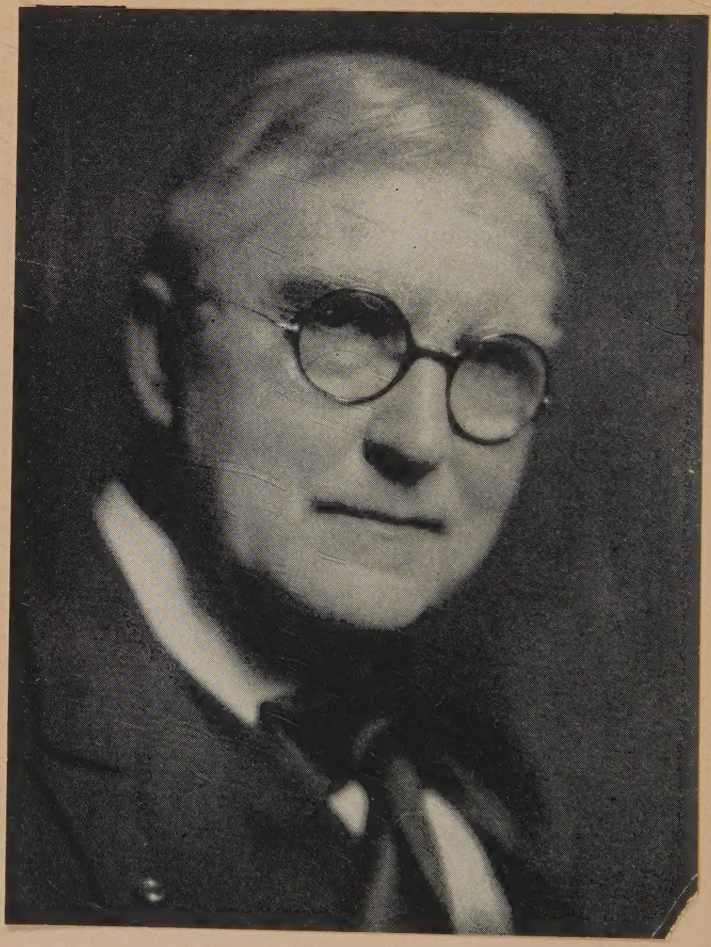
WHY I AM A CHRISTIAN



DR. FRANK CRANE

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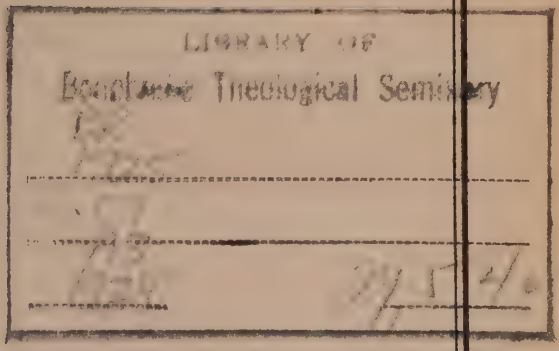
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DEDICATED
TO
MY GRANDNEPHEW
FRANK CRANE II
NOW TWO MONTHS OLD
AND TO HIS CONTEMPORARIES

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WHY I AM A CHRISTIAN

"I have no mockings or arguments; I witness and wait."

WALT WHITMAN.

FOREWORD

How much of a Christian am I? All the Christianity I have is what I can use; the rest has gone into the wastebasket.

THIS book was suggested to me by my friend, John M. Siddall, late editor of *The American Magazine*. One day he said:

> "There's a book I want you to write sometime; a book on 'Why I am a Christian?' If you'll tell the truth it ought to be mighty interesting."

I am sure that in this book I have told the truth. Whether it is interesting or not the reader will have to judge.

Usable Religion

"All the religion I have I am using. I am carrying no extra baggage. I am not loaded up with a lot of beliefs that make no matter. What religion I have is one hundred per cent. practical."

Usable Religion

I AM not so optimistic as to expect that the statements in this book will not be attacked sharply, for I am talking about religion, and to most minds religion is not an open subject, but a closed one. Most people have formed their opinion about it or have accepted the opinion of someone else about it, and their reasoning is not directed toward examining whether that opinion is right, but toward seeking proofs that it is right.

Unfortunately, religion is more mixed up with prejudice than any other subject. It is not a matter to be investigated; it is a matter to be believed. One is a Catholic or a Methodist or a Baptist, just as one is a Republican or a Democrat, or even as he is an American, a Frenchman or a German. It is something, in most cases, he has inherited. The common feeling is that if a man changes his religion he is a sort of traitor or renegade.

This feeling doubtless serves to keep millions in the Church, but at the same time it operates to keep tens of millions out of the Church.

To me religion is not at all any sort of war cry. It is on no level with pride of country, or partisanship, or any such thing.

To me religion is life. It is the essence of my valuation of life and my relation to the great forces of life. Hence it is a matter to be studied, a matter to grow with my growth. It is not like a chunk of granite; it is like a vigorous tree which constantly puts forth new buds and branches and "beareth his fruit in his season."

It is for this reason that I should like this book to be taken as being not controversial, but simply a humble effort to state the case as it seems to me.

Judged from other standpoints what religion I have may not be considerable. Some may think I am hopelessly lost, and others that I am really not religious at all. These statements I shall not discuss, but I wish to declare one thing.

And that is that all the religion I have I am using. I am carrying no extra baggage. I am not loaded up with a lot of beliefs that make no matter. At least I may be allowed to say that what religion I have is one hundred per cent practical.

It has always been amazing to me that people make so much of their faith, are constantly reiterating their creed, are praying and singing about their religion, and yet that it is considered hypocritical and rather unbecoming to profess to practice it. Any man who would say that he is all

that his Church desires him to be and that he measures up to every requirement of his faith would be regarded as fanatical.

In my own case I make no bones of saying that I use every bit of the religion that I believe in. The rest has gone into the wastebasket.

I do not claim to be perfect. Indeed, I do not believe that God expects me to be perfect, nor wants me to be, any more than He wants and expects the sapling to become at once a great tree. Whatever sin I have I consider to be imperfection. As fast as I can see it and learn how to get rid of it I try to improve, and I expect to go on trying both in this world and in the next.

The separation of mankind into two classes, the saints and the sinners, the saved and the unsaved, is to my mind entirely fictitious, and the result of the slavish following of some logical system. But I regulate my life by no syllogisms. Life is too complex to squeeze through the convolutions of an argument.

I am happy not because I have arrived, but because I am traveling.

I am contented, not because I am holy, but because I think that I can grow normally into a better condition.

The Story of the Shoeless Town

"Pardon me if I seem intrusive, but I notice that nobody in this town seems to wear shoes, yet everyone appears to suffer from cold and bruised feet. Would you mind telling me why?"
"Ah!" said the old gentleman, raising his eyes piously, "why indeed!"

The Story of the Shoeless Town

SOME years ago there was printed an article, which I think was written by Hugh Price Hughes, entitled "Ubique." This is the Latin word for "everywhere" and the story was intended to be a satire upon professed Christians.

The gist of it was that a man had occasion to go for the first time to the town of Ubique on business. He arrived at the railroad station on a blustering December day. There was a cold wind and a flurry of snow. As he walked along the street he saw women dressed in costly furs and gentlemen in fur coats, but all having bare feet. The population seemed respectable and well-to-do, but no one wore shoes. They limped along, were afflicted with chilblains and bruises and suffered great pain.

When he went to the hotel he found the clerk at the desk, the bellboys and other attendants all barefoot. At the dinner table he sat next to a prosperous looking old gentleman and fell into conversation. As this new acquaintance seemed so kindly and open-minded, our traveler said to him:

"Pardon me if I seem intrusive, but I notice that nobody in this town seems to wear shoes, yet everyone appears to suffer from cold and bruised feet. Would you mind telling me why?"

"Ah!" said the old gentleman, raising his eyes piously, "why indeed!"

He talked further with his companion, but could never get past that point. The old gentleman was perfectly willing to admit that shoes were desirable above all things, and that everybody ought to wear them, but he could not tell why they did not do so.

The traveler took a walk through the town and found that here and there were beautiful buildings, more elaborate and larger than the ordinary. Seeing the janitor sweeping the steps of one of these structures, he stopped and talked to him.

"What is this building? I am a stranger in the town and notice there are many buildings like this."

"This is a shoe factory," said the janitor.

"Oh! Then they make shoes here."

"Oh, not at all," was the reply. "They just talk about making shoes, and sing about shoes and pray about them."

Pointing to a sign by the door he saw an announcement that the chief official of the factory was going to give a lecture every seven days on shoes. The subjects listed included "The Origin of Shoes," "The History of Shoe Making," "Varieties of Leather," etc. He was informed by the janitor that once every seven days every other

business in town was required by law to close, that nothing was allowed to be open but the shoe factories and the people all gathered in them to sing and pray and hear lectures about shoes. But no shoes were produced and nobody wore them.

Finally in a little side street he found a small shop inside of which was an old German cobbler making a pair of shoes. He bought a pair and took it back to his hotel to present to the old gentleman with whom he had become acquainted.

To his surprise the old gentleman declined the gift, assuring him that none of the best people ever wore shoes, and in fact it was considered a sign of fanaticism and hypocrisy ever really to wear them.

The point in this story is only too well taken. It seems a pity that religion, the very best and most usable force in the world for developing character and making happiness, should have been jockeyed into such a position that people are afraid to claim that they have it and use it.

Religion as a topic of conversation for polite conversation in society is taboo. It is not considered well-bred to discuss religion in social circles. The only reason for this is that religion has degenerated into a matter of partisanship. It has enlisted in its aid a lot of fears and unworthy

motives that do not make for wholesomeness and normalcy of life.

If my confession and example shall be of use to anyone in stepping out into self-confidence, into a simple trust in God and an intelligent application of the principles of Jesus, I shall be satisfied.

I believe that most people are better Christians than they think they are. I believe that men are better than any institution they have formed. I believe that human nature is innately good and wholesome and that the purpose of Jesus was to develop human nature normally.

WHY I AM A CHRISTIAN

"The age-old controversies of sects do not interest me. If you ask me whether I am a Trinitarian or a Unitarian you might as well ask me whether I am a Guelph or a Ghibelline."

Why I Am a Christian

IT is my desire to set down as clearly as I can and as frankly and as honestly as I am able the actual and existing reasons why I call myself a Christian.

It seems to me that this will be helpful to many people. For instead of believing that there are multitudes who call themselves Christians but that are not really so, I am inclined to believe that there are multitudes who are really Christians but who do not call themselves so. I believe there is a vast deal of unconscious Christianity among people who apparently take no interest in the Church and its doings. During my ministry I knew any number of people who considered themselves "outsiders" yet who were "not far from the kingdom," who indeed seemed to me to be leading lives in very remarkable conformity to the ideals of the Master.

In the age-long disputes of the Church I have no disposition to participate. As far as I can read, none of them were ever settled anyhow. They were good fights and lasted for centuries but every one of them seemed to be a draw. Almost all the theological disputes that have been settled at all have been settled by outgrowing and forgetting them. If there are no longer any heated discussions

on the great questions of whether the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father alone or from the Father and the Son, or the Mode of Baptism, or Transsubstantiation, or Foreordination, it is not because either set of champions proved their point but because nobody cares any more. Neither side won the game, the spectators left the benches.

As a matter of fact almost all the theological points that have been the storm centers of contention have really had no relation to life, and by and by people found it out. To me Christianity is an integral part of life. All the Christianity I have left is that which enters into my daily life. I am no more ashamed to say that I rejoice in God because I can use Him than I am to say that I rejoice in the sun because I can use it. To my mind the best praise I can offer to God is to make use of His influence in my development and the worst offense I can commit against Him is to indulge in lip service and straightway go and forget Him.

Let me state therefore as succinctly as possible the real and operating reasons behind my claim that I am a Christian. And I am the better prepared to make these statements because I am not at present occupying a position as a minister of the Gospel. I am engaged in secular business. My name is known

through my newspaper articles to millions of people and very few of them know whether I belong to a Church or not.

I shall feel grateful to the reader who does not try to pigeonhole me, to label me, or "place" me. I wish to speak simply as a human being. Really the age-old controversies of sects do not interest me.

If you should ask me whether I am a Trinitarian or a Unitarian, a Catholic or a Protestant, Fundamentalist or Methodist or Baptist, you might as well ask me whether I am a Guelph or a Ghibelline.

Autobiographical

"This writing is not theological; it is autobiographical. I am not arguing, I am telling my experience."

Autobiographical

THIS writing is not theological; it is autobiographical.

I do not wish to argue. I am not ambitious to convert anyone to my opinion. I wish simply to tell some of the results of my experience in the hope that those who read may be interested and perhaps helped by some of my experiments and conclusions.

I am now over sixty years of age. For the main portion of my life, for some twenty-five years before the age of fifty, I was a preacher. About the age of fifty I left the pulpit and devoted myself to authorship, writing mainly for the newspapers and to some extent for magazines. For about ten years therefore my calling has been secular and I have been out of ecclesiastical circles.

I call myself a Christian. And as I understand the term I think I am even a better Christian now that I was during my life as a Christian minister. The reason of this is that it seems to me difficult for anyone to be a Christian when being a Christian is his profession. Professionalism is hard on sincerity. I think that the ministry on the whole is a trying place for a man to be a genuine Christian, and that good preachers who are good Christians deserve a great deal of credit. I think the best place

for the all around development of Christian character is where one is engaged in some secular business for the earning of his living. To be a business man or a wage earner is to my mind the most normal occupation for a human being. This is because Christianity is not something to be done, it is the way you do things. It is not the words, it is the tune. And when people are so insistent upon pronouncing the words, they often lose the beauty of the music.

In what I write there is no criticism of others, neither of priests, evangelists or other propagandists. They may argue and make converts if they choose. Upon occasion I may take a hand in their controversies myself and dispute, deny and persuade. But I am not going to do this now. All that I have set myself to do is to tell as honestly as I can the reasons that induce me to be a Christian at the present time. I am relating an experience and giving my point of view.

I have lived a little more than the average cycle of life. I have moved in all strata of society. I have known the poor and the rich, the cultured and the ignorant, the fanatical, the cynical, the intelligent and the deluded. I have read many books, some advocating, some condemning and some

ridiculing various forms of faith and all faiths. I have listened to preachers and to infidels. I have made infinite experiments, and have been as curious as the average person to know all forms of life. I have had the enthusiasms, doubts and struggles of boyhood and adolescence. I have had my periods of mystical extravagance and my periods of backsliding and indifference.

I have arrived at the age where I am, I suppose, permanently settled. My relations with life are rather fixed. My point of view of the universe, of mankind and of my own destiny will hardly be radically changed. And now after going through the whole performance, I call myself a Christian, and it may be of interest to many to know why.

It may save misunderstanding if I clearly state the reason why I quit the pulpit. It was not because I had any difficulty with my congregation, nor because there was any conflict of a theological nature—or of any other nature for that matter. I quit simply because I thought I saw a form of self-expression in writing and in being entirely disconnected from any ecclesiastical organization, a form which appealed to me more than being the spokesman for a religious denomination.

There has been a great deal written about people

who have seceded from the Church for conscience sake, because they had doubts concerning the creed. All this has been to me merely a matter of curious interest. I never had any such trouble. I always knew that the Church, being a growth, naturally contained a great deal of dead wood and outgrown formulæ, but that it also contained a vast deal of what is true and alive and useful. It was to this latter that I always devoted my attention. Of course if I were going to make a Church I would make one that would emphasize only the essentials; but Churches are not made, they grow, and without imperfection growth is impossible. Imperfections irritate some people, but they forget that where there is no imperfection there is no life, that is, there is no development from a lower to a higher state.

At present I am a newspaper man. Keep that in mind. This is not written by a preacher in defense of his calling. It is written by a business man as an explanation of his condition and point of view. In my present calling nobody cares a rap whether I am a professed Christian or not. I could get along just as well if people understood me to be a Buddhist, a Jew or an Infidel. I am a Christian therefore simply because I like it and I find it conducive to my happiness and my general welfare.

That I Was Born in a Christian Community Has Something to Do with It

"I reverence the past because out of it has grown the present, and the present because it contains the future."

That I Was Born in a Christian Community Has Something to Do with It

THE fact that I am a Christian is very considerably influenced by the fact that my family, my nation, my type of civilization and my epoch were Christian. I am very frank to acknowledge this and see no reason for being ashamed of it.

This does not at all mean that I accept any creed because it was my father's nor adopt any set of opinions merely because they are traditional. But it does mean that I was given a very favorable start. I should have had a much harder time trying to be a Christian if I had lived during adolescence among the Hottentots of Africa or the Mohammedans of Turkey. I was born to a very valuable inheritance and acknowledge with gratitude the usufruct of evolution which was handed to me.

Christianity came to me after a long period of trial in the world, some two thousand years of experiment. Much of this history is a record of mistakes, but mistakes are often the most instructive part of experience.

I find that during this two thousand years my ancestors were constantly smothering the pure teachings of Jesus with the deceptive expediencies of heathenism, they repeatedly sacrificed the purity

of Christ's teaching to their own egotism, greed, passion and ignorance. But I find also that eventually they recognized this, were ashamed of it and were sorry for it. All the so-called crimes of the Church, its tyrannies, persecutions and offences against humanity were manifestly caused by the imperfections of the people who were trying to follow Jesus, and they were cured, to what extent they were cured at all, by reverting to those original principles.

I reverence the past, but not in the sense of refusing to see its errors. I reverence the past because out of it has grown the present, and because by studying the past and its experiments, its failures and its progress, we shall be able to grow a better future.

I believe in Evolution, for every intelligent student and observer must believe in it. Nothing that has to do with life is "made," everything is grown. Christianity itself is a growth, a growth out of Judaism which was the best ethical endeavor the world had produced up to the time of Jesus. Jesus was a growth. He came, He said, "in the fulness of time." And after Him Christianity had to grow; to pass through all the extravagances and diseases of adolescence and the *Sturm und Drang*

of manhood so that it might get itself thoroughly incorporated into the race.

And Christianity stands or falls not as an excellent theoretical system but as a program that has been tried out by innumerable lives and in every possible human exigency.

And bad as the world may be today it is vastly better than it ever was before. The sentiment against cruelty, injustice, beastly living and war grows stronger every year; and the most considerable factor that causes this growth is the influence of this man Jesus, His example and His teaching.

The Hope of Heaven and the Fear of Hell Have Nothing to Do with It

"Rewards and punishments influence conduct but do not make character."

The Hope of Heaven and the Fear of Hell Have Nothing to Do with It

I DO not believe in rewards and punishments, as these terms are commonly understood. That is, I do not think that the government of God or the laws of Nature are arranged on any such system. We are, of course, influenced by the desirable things we want and by the repugnant things we fear, but it seems to me that these are largely motives of childhood and that they weaken and disappear with maturity. With adulthood comes the supremacy of conscience and the willingness to renounce what we crave for the sake of a better satisfaction. There comes also the scorn and defiance of fear and a greater evaluation of that courage that stands against it. Of course this may be said to be merely a substitution of a new set of wants and fears, but it is perhaps as closely as I can express my idea.

The reason that I am a Christian is not that being so will enable me to get to heaven, for my information about what is going to take place after death is entirely too scant and disputable for it to be the disposing force of my life. And what makes me a Christian is not the fear of hell, for I consider the usual conception of fantastic, cruel and eternal

torment to be entirely unworthy of the kind of God I believe in.

Of course I believe that following Christ brings joy and that the refusal to do so brings misery. But that is no more nor less than the conditions that surround every form of life. Nature has arranged that all normal living in accordance with its laws shall as a general rule be pleasurable, and that the violation of these laws shall be accompanied with pain. To discover this is a part of the education of the instincts and helps us to adjust ourselves to the cosmic laws even when we do not understand them. But to base my choice of a mode of life upon a supposed condition of bliss hereafter, or condition of torment, hardly seems to me to be either worthy of my manhood or in fact practical.

I am happier here and now when I follow the principles of Jesus; I am wretched here and now when I reject them or doubt them, and this universe, being an orderly thing, and law being the same whether on earth or among the stars, whether now or a million years from now, the probability is that if my life shall continue after death I will still be happier in following His leadership, and still be more miserable if I wander away. That is about all there is to it. As influences upon my conduct both heaven and hell are quite feeble.

My Belief in Christ Is Not Based on His Credentials

"There He stands, the most majestical figure in the history of the human race. To me He needs no credentials. I do not care what part of the woods He comes from."

My Belief in Christ Is Not Based on His Credentials

I BELIEVE in Jesus, I accept Him as my Master and willingly call myself one of His followers, but my sole reason for this lies in the Gospel story of His sayings and doings.

For instance, I believe in Jesus, but not because He is the Son of God. Some claim that He was divine and "the fulness of the godhead bodily," others claim that He was merely a great man. I have my opinion on this matter just as others have, but that opinion is not what induces me to accept His leadership. As far as His being my Master is concerned it makes no difference to me whether He was God and spent a few years on earth or whether He was a very wise man who lived His mortal span as others. In either case what He said and did is good enough for me.

My belief in Jesus is not based upon the fact that He was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. This doctrine has been hotly championed on the one hand and denied on the other. As far as my being a Christian is concerned it makes no difference.

The fact of my being a Christian does not rest

upon the inspiration of the Scriptures. Prove this or disprove it and my Master remains untouched by your conclusions.

Jesus' authority does not rest upon the miracles. Miracles may prove something to others but they have no effect upon my acceptance of His leadership. The fact that a man could turn water into wine, heal a shriveled arm or even raise the dead, might amaze me and convince me that He had powers that I do not have, but would not at all prove to me His qualifications as my spiritual guide.

There are many people who cannot believe anyone unless they know the authority behind him. All I want to know of a man is the authority within him. If one tells me the truth I do not care whether he is prime minister or a bootblack. And I can discover whether what he said is true by working it out in my own life better than by investigating his right to speak.

I find in the words of Jesus a depth of vision, an understanding of the human heart and a knowledge of the great laws that govern human relations, that I find in no other teacher. You cannot dislodge Him from His position as my Master by proving that He did not perform the miracles or that He

was not born of a Virgin; the only way you can dislodge Him is to bring along some better Master than He. When you find me a teacher with more wisdom, more sympathy and more magnetic influence, then I will leave Jesus, but not till then.

I can say today as one of His first disciples said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

I can even say that as far as my being a Christian is concerned it is not necessary to prove that Jesus actually existed. Victor Hugo might have written the story or Josephus or Shakespeare. Jesus does not stand or fall for me upon the credibility of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They were His satellites; He was not theirs.

I do not care what part of the woods He comes from. I am not concerned in His genealogy. All the nice disputes regarding the historical accuracy of His story are to me "lunar politics." There He stands, the most majestical figure that ever swam across the vision of mankind, the wisest, warmest, divinest phenomenon that ever occurred in the history of this human race. To me He needs no credentials.

What religion I have is not a religion of authority. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that

all the authority of Jesus is in the reasonableness of His teaching and not in the source from which it comes.

Better than any other teacher He tells me how to live, how best I can find my way through the complex storms of this existence, how to treat my family, my friends, my enemies, my neighbors. He is the truest source of whatever culture I may possess, for, as Joubert says, "Culture consists in anything that shall enable us to get our satisfactions over from the body to the mind."

To me Jesus is my spiritual executive, and I ask of Him only what I ask of any other executive, "Can He do the business?"

It should constantly be kept in mind by the reader that I am now telling only of myself. I am not condemning others who think differently. There are some minds who need to have truth buttressed by some external authority. Those minds may be just as good as mine, but they are not mine.

Jesus does not so much command me as He utters me. He does not so much lead me, as one leads a blind man, He opens my eyes. Like every good teacher He does not so much give me information as He arouses in me the desire to gain wisdom. The things He said are not true simply because

He said them, He said them because they are true. It is not because He is properly accredited that I believe what He says, it is because of the amen in my own heart to what He says. All this pother about authoritative rulings and interpretations, and authority generally, does not interest me.

I Am a Christian Because Jesus Shows, Most Satisfactorily to Me, the Kind of Person God Is

"Servant of All is a greater title than King of Kings."

I Am a Christian Because Jesus Shows, Most Satisfactorily to Me, the Kind of Person God Is

WHATEVER we may consider to be the nature of Jesus, whether we think Him a God, a great teacher or even a mistaken enthusiast, we cannot doubt that His own idea of His mission was that He was to reveal to us the nature of God. In all He did and said there was the underlying meaning that, as He said to His disciple, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." And whether He was mistaken or not it certainly seems to me that no one else ever gave the world a better picture of the kind of person Almighty God ought to be. If I were going to imagine a God I could not imagine one more worthy of my respect and worship than one like Jesus Christ.

In two particulars Jesus contributed decisively to the world's God idea. First, He revealed God as Friendly. Second, He revealed God as a Servant and not as the Monarch of His universe.

These two, more than any other ideas that have ever been let loose in the world, have tended to ameliorate the customs and improve the institutions of mankind.

First, He revealed God as Friendly. In this He emphasized and developed a conception which had arisen in Judaism, but one that had been almost extinguished by those waves of heathenism that by the time Jesus arrived had almost submerged the beauty of the Jewish faith. Particularly the idea occurs in the poetry attributed to David. Whether David wrote the Twenty-third Psalm or not it was certainly composed by some Jew and presumably a young man. I like to imagine David, the shepherd boy, tending his father's flocks and watching the sheep gather around him as the shadows of evening thicken. He has been thinking, as all of us have thought, of the great problems of destiny and the universe, and wondering what kind of a Person it is who sits in the heavens and moves all things. The youth is a poet, and it is the way of poets to seek to express the invisible and unutterable by the things seen, to "give to airy nothings a local habitation and a name." He glances at the sheep who have crowded about him for protection and the thought flashes into his mind that here in this situation is a picture of God. Then he composes that song, which is the most influential poem ever devised by the mind of man, a song which has comforted more hearts and quieted more fears than

any other poetry, which indeed has lit a candle in the very halls of death:

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death
I shall fear no evil,
For Thou art with me,
Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

This is the peculiar note of Judaism. This is why "salvation is of the Jews." For this is the most redemptive idea that ever entered the world. God is Friendly. This thought you will hardly find in the works of Homer, Æschylus or any Greek, nor in the teachings of Confucius, Buddha or Mahomet; it is unique to Judæa.

And this is the thought that is the burden of Christ's teachings concerning God. He taught us to pray saying, "Our Father." That word warmed the world. That idea has held on its dim and perilous way past all perversions, through all cruel creeds and malarial institutions, all slippery logic, and is today still vigorous and fresh with the forces of eternal youth. I owe it to Jesus Christ and to David, His predecessor, that I can flash defiance to all the bloodless ecclesiasticism of history and cry, "God is my Friend."

In the second place, Jesus showed us that God, if He resembles Himself, was not the Monarch of the universe but its loving and upholding Servant.

As I have pointed out in my book, "God and Democracy," the world had always conceived of the supreme Ruler of the universe as being like the rulers of earthly nations. That was because such was the common idea of Greatness. God must be the greatest Person conceivable; the King was the embodiment of the popular notion of greatness; hence God must be a King. So He was conceived, in the earlier efforts of men to imagine Him, as kingly in His attributes. That is, He was inordinately selfish, vain, jealous, irrationally arbitrary and difficult to approach. Jesus was not that kind of a person at all.

Jesus occupied no throne, sought no honors and occupied Himself with serving men for their benefit instead of ruling them for His own advantage. That is because the business of Serving is much greater than the business of Ruling. As He said, "He that would be greatest among you let Him be Servant of All."

Some time ago I had an experience that brought this idea forcibly home to me. I was awakened one night by what seemed to be someone pounding on

the door of my chamber. It was about two o'clock in the morning, the quiet hour of darkness. After a dazed moment or two I realized that what I had heard was my heart pounding in the arteries of my neck on the pillow. About the same time there came to me a sound of a switch engine puffing along the railroad tracks not far from my house. And the thought occurred to me, "There you go, both of you; and I have about as much to do with the one as I have with the other. I don't know who is running that locomotive, and I don't know who is making my heart beat. Certainly I am not consciously controlling it. I could stop it, with a knife or with poison, but I could not start it again."

And then came the thought that the one who is making my heart operate is no other than God. I seemed to see Him working all night at the central pump that sends the blood of life throughout my body, working patiently whether I was awake or not. The old saying came to me with a new meaning, "He that watcheth over Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

And I thought of Him, the great Almighty, operating the windmill of my lungs, to aerate my blood stream, standing like a bespectacled chemist in the laboratory of my stomach transforming the

food by the intricate processes of organic chemistry into material for flesh and blood, guiding every corpuscle on its devious way through veins and capillaries; and doing this not only for me but for every other living human being in the world; and for all the animal creation, the cattle upon a thousand hills, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea; and attending to the process of growth or decay and all the myriad life forms of the vegetable world; and beside all this guiding the stars in their courses and wheeling the white galaxies upon their strange paths.

And it seemed to me that I had gotten a new and nearer glimpse of God, that almost like Moses I had seen His hinder parts. This is that infinite majesty that no one can comprehend, this is that unutterable brightness that no man can look upon and live. I had peeped upon the great Servant of All at His work.

Such greatness as far outshines the theatric splendor of a heavenly sultan sitting among his cherubim and seraphim as the majesty of an Alpine sunrise outshines the glimmer of candles in a stuffy playhouse.

It is this idea that Jesus gave us, that God is no monarch but rather a loving Father, and that all of

us are equally His children, it is this idea that is the germ of Democracy, and has tumbled over the tyrannies and autocracies of the world one after another.

I am a Christian not only for what Jesus does to my own life but for what He is doing for the world I live in, for the race to which I belong.

The influence of a universally revered Master having a character like Jesus is hardly realized. The ecclesiastical princes find their love of display and domination insensibly but effectively curbed when the people remember that the great Head of the Church Himself was a Man of such pronounced humility. The kings and emperors and other Magnificent Ones have been seriously curbed in their ambitions for power and display by that figure of the lowly Jesus which cannot be gotten out of the minds of the people. Even the plutocrat of today feels that he must justify himself by doing something for the public welfare; he cannot escape the menacing shadow of Him who was called the Son of God yet who "went about doing good." Rockefeller must establish institutions for the eradication of disease and for education; Carnegie must build libraries and endow peace foundations; Henry Ford must justify his wealth by giving em-

ployment to multitudes. The point here is not that these are good men and commendable, but the point is rather that they are compelled to measure themselves and their success by the ideas of Jesus. There is no way of getting rid of this Man's standards; we may adopt them or we may reject them; we cannot ignore them.

I Am a Christian Because Christianity Fits My Instincts

"Homo sum et nihil humanum a me alienum puto."

TERENCE.

I find nothing in Christianity to be non-human.

I Am a Christian Because Christianity Fits My Instincts

THE best proof of anything lies after all in the instincts. I think it is Emerson who said that when God has a point to carry with the human race He plants His arguments in the instincts.

Much as I value my reason and respect my intelligence I am a little suspicious of it. For experience has taught me that logic is too often swayed by desire, that proof of a thing which we want to believe is often deceptively convincing. In the great issues of life I am not moved by lawyer-like arguments so much as by my instincts. Too often an argument is won by those who are clever with the use of words and resourceful in dialectic sword play.

For instance, I love my wife, my children, my friends and my country, not because I have reasoned out the advantage of so doing so much as because I am following a subconscious impulse that experience has shown me to be just as powerful as logic, but as dependable, and quite as fruitful in results.

When I speak of instincts I speak of the whole number of them. I have all kinds. I have instincts of hunger and thirst, of self-preservation, of fight-

ing, of greed, of sexual desire, of justice, of revenge, of the love of beauty, of fear, of courage, of righteousness and the like. All this mixture constitutes my humanity.

I do not think that some of these instincts are evil and that I ought to eradicate them. They are all good, for God put them in me, and "what God has made call thou not common."

What I need is something to set these instincts in order, to adjust and regulate them so that I shall be healthy and normal. I want to be human in the best sense of the word.

Because one of these instincts when overdeveloped and unrestrained plays havoc does not mean that it is a wicked instinct, but simply that it has gotten out of place. My instincts in a state of nature are like wild horses. I do not think that I should kill these horses but rather that I should train them so that I may make use of their strength to carry me and my loads.

Christianity is the best system of teaching I have found for producing the right team play of my instincts. I am a sort of steam engine. The instincts are the steam, for all the force I have comes from my instincts; my intellect and my will contain no dynamic power, but are purely regulative. So I

might say that my instincts are the steam, my body is the locomotive, my mind is the fireman, and Jesus Christ is the best engineer.

Some of these instincts are strongly animal and I have inherited them from thousands of years of animal life running back through primitive man, savagery and the beast. They have their place in me and it is a normal and useful one. But unless they are guided, reined and kept in proper subservience they are only too likely to mutiny and destroy me.

Sex desire, for instance, which I share with all animal creation, is only kept from becoming antisocial and degrading by being properly subordinated to the more lately developed instincts of justice, loyalty, altruism and the consideration of the welfare of other people.

When I say that Christianity is the best normalizer and controller of the instincts I of course do not mean by Christianity all that the various fanatics and egotists have decreed from time to time. I refer always to those fundamental principles which common sense discovers to be revealed in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

If any one persists in identifying Christianity with the Church, and the teachings of Jesus with

the various doctrines which have been decreed by the Church, let me say once for all that any discussion between him and me will be entirely profitless. Unless we are able to go back to the simple story of the Gospels and get the main gist of Jesus' purpose and discriminate between that and all the infinite non-essentials there is no particular use in thinking further about the matter.

Not that I discard the Church, for the Church in the main is right; especially my Church, which is the Church of the Greatest Common Divisor. And the kind of influence that goes out from the churches of Jesus Christ on the whole is the best known influence for making normal, wholesome, "all around" men and women.

Jesus Himself placed His greatest emphasis upon one instinct, Love. Love is not a product of the mind, it is pure instinct. Yet this He said is "the fulfilling of the Law" this is the golden rule of conduct between human beings.

I do not find one thing in Jesus' influence that is non-human, that tends in any wise to emasculate me or remove from human life any of its warmth, electricity, beauty and energy. Of course a great many so-called fads and sects of Christianity have been

guilty of this. I take it for granted that the reader can distinguish.

I do not think there is anything in the following of Jesus that makes me the less human. What is ordinarily spoken of as "other worldliness," by which is usually meant removal from the common and normal motives of human life and the substitution of ghostly and fanciful enthusiasm, seems to me merely a neurotic perversion.

The word "purity" is quite commonly used in a sense that is little more than absurd. One is really pure when the forces within him are perfectly governed by his ideals; I should hardly call him pure when he has no forces to govern. "Chastity" as Richard Grant White pointed out, is a much misused term; it does not mean necessarily virginity; our mothers are as chaste as our sisters.

One great curse that has fallen upon our thinking is the notion that righteousness is something negative. The Christian is supposed to be the man who observes the longest list of "Don'ts."

Christianity rightly understood means the energizing of all the faculties, the enrichment of life. Christians ought to be the salt of the earth, "and if the salt has lost its savor wherewith shall the earth be salted?" The reason why so many people con-

sider Christians to be bloodless mollycoddles, and think that the only way to have a crowded and rapturous existence is along the purple ways of vice and excess, is simply that they are child-minded. The Bible is scientifically accurate when it speaks of the sinner as a fool. Jesus said that He came that we might have joy and that our joy should be more abundant. I am a Christian because the following of Christ is the best plan I have ever found to make my life rich and full.

I Am a Christian Because the Ideas of Christianity Energize Life

"The fundamental creed is a belief in life."

CHARLES WAGNER.

I Am a Christian Because the Ideas of Christianity Energize Life

"THE fundamental creed is a belief in life," said Pastor Wagner. This seems to me to be unreservedly true. The first thing of all that I believe in and am sure of is Life. My belief in Life underlies all my other beliefs. It is deeper than the intellect and all the conclusions of rationalizing. Belief in Life comes even before belief in the truth or in the good or even belief in God. In fact truth, goodness and God Himself depend upon their relations to Life, to my life.

This is the touchstone of all. Every doctrine must in the end be judged by its effect upon Life. This is not egotism; it is the simple condition upon which all thought rests. The important thing about history and all the past, and about whatever is to come in the future, and about the vast areas of existence that now are actually around me, is the relation of all these to me.

As far as I am concerned the universe began when I was born, and as far as I am concerned the end of the world comes when I die. Cæsar and Charlemagne never meant anything to me until I began to live, and what is going to happen a hun-

dred or a thousand years after I die interests me in only a speculative way.

For this reason about all the Christianity that I have left and am inclined to fight for or to study about, is that part of it which bears upon me in one way or another. There are many topics the discussion of which occupy fat volumes and fat bishops that to me belong in the same category as the disputes over the boundaries of Kamchatka, or the question whether it is better to open with the king's pawn or the pawn of the queen's bishop.

I value Christianity because it enlarges, deepens and improves the quality of Life. Those who think that the principles of Jesus depress and limit life are, it seems to me, mistaken. Those of His doctrines that seem to have this effect are misunderstood. When He teaches self-control, for instance, self-sacrifice, or the taking up of one's Cross, the purpose is to make us more and not less alive, and such a result indeed my experience has shown will follow. To the extent that I have curbed and resisted my more brutal and selfish impulses by subjecting them to more altruistic motives my happiness and efficiency have been increased.

Christianity to my mind is not intended to save us from struggle for there is no development of

the life force without struggle. It is not a means of escaping responsibility; it equips us to carry responsibility. It is not an assurance that someone will take care of us, it enables us to take care of ourselves.

Jesus said upon one occasion, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." The purpose of a yoke is not to enable the ox to get rid of his load, it is a device by which he can more efficiently draw his load. I do not want to get rid of the problems, perplexities and responsibilities of existence, for life would be meaningless and colorless without them; what I need is to know how to meet my difficulties and triumph over them.

All the restrictions that I find in Christianity are in the nature of a pruning knife which by cutting off the false growths make the plant grow stronger and become more fruitful.

To me Christianity is not a scheme for the postponement of life. The idea that we are to suffer along here in inevitable wretchedness, and that our Saviour will see to it that in the next world we shall have bliss enough to make up for it, does not appeal to me. It is more Mahometan than Christian.

My demand is to find something that shall ele-

vate and clarify my existence day by day, now and here. I am a Christian because Christianity does this for me. I do not say that it will not take the faithful to heaven hereafter, all I say is that if that were all it would do it would not be sufficient to attract me.

The typical Church situated in a graveyard and surrounded by tombstones has always impressed me as mediæval; my ideal Church building would be right in the busiest center of the town, in the very heart of the stream of human interest, for the main purpose of the Church ought to be to sweeten and clarify the waters of that stream.

The most unanswerable demonstration of Christianity as a social force is its effect upon the lives of the people. I heard the other day a traveler who had just returned from the Orient say that he knew of no movement that had ever taken place in China for the improvement of the welfare of the common people that had not originated among the Christian missionaries.

Jesus Christ is the silent, invisible and too often unrecognized leader of the Labor Movement, at least of that element of the Labor Movement which is of permanent value to humanity. For it is from him there flows the idea of the importance of the

human soul—any soul. It is because His teachings have sifted down into the common consciousness of the people that human slavery has been abolished, that intolerant tyranny over the common laborer will not be tolerated, that there is a constant effort to improve the conditions of prisons, and that the dark vultures of cruelty and inhumanity which in the past have fattened upon the unfortunate are being driven away.

If human life generally is considered more worth while, if the blind, the lame and the halt are treated with gentler hands, and if the conditions of asperity that prevailed in past centuries have been generally mollified, there can be little question that the chief force behind this improvement flows from this Man.

And it is because of Him that optimism has intelligent grounds, and that we look forward to the time when the world shall be a decenter place to live in, and

"Sweeter shall the roses blow
In those far years, those happier years,
And children weep when we lie low
Far fewer tears, far softer tears."

"AS IF"

I Am a Christian, Not Because I Know the Christ Story Is True, but Because It Produces Its Beneficial Effects upon Me When I Act As If It Were True.

"Truth is what will work."

WILLIAM JAMES.

"As If": I Am a Christian, Not Because I Know the Christ Story Is True, but Because It Produces Its Beneficial Effects upon Me When I Act As If It Were True *

TO be downright honest about the matter I cannot say that I have personally examined all the evidence and rest my faith in Jesus Christ upon my conclusion that the story is entirely authentic. And if my readers will all be quite candid they will admit that scarcely one of them has studied the records and made his decision as a competent and well-informed judge. Christianity is an existing force in the world, Christ is an actual radiating presence now in humanity. How Christ got here, and exactly where Christianity came from, not one in a million knows. When we say that we know absolutely that Christ existed, what we mean is that we have entire faith in the books, institutions, historians, witnesses and other mediums through which we have received this knowledge. Carefully sticking to the truth, this is all any of us can say.

There may be many who are offended when I say that, as far as my being a Christian is concerned, it is not of essential importance to me that the whole Christ story took place as recorded. They

* The reader is referred to the interesting "Philosophie des Als Ob," by Hans Vaihinger.

may declare that they cannot be saved unless there is actually a Saviour, and unless they are sure that Jesus is no myth they feel that they are deluding themselves.

As a matter of fact both these persons and myself are doing precisely the same thing; we are acting "as if" the story were true. We are assuming the Christ account as a hypothesis, and upon that hypothesis we are ordering our lives.

And in this we are living in no fool's paradise and are not endeavoring to build a solid structure upon nothing at all. On the contrary we are acting rationally, sensibly and the same way in which we act in all the other most important departments of life and thought.

Christianity is a force, a force that molds character, sets ideas in order and controls conduct. And we never actually know the real essence of any force.

Christianity is a law, similar to the laws of nature. And all we can do with any natural law is to postulate it, act as if it were true, and see how it works.

We do not know what electricity is. All we know is how to use it and how it operates. We know how to turn it on and off. We know how to

conduct it by wires or through space and produce light and power with it. Certain theories about it have been stated; by acting as if those theories were true we manage to illuminate our houses, run our trolleys and send telegrams, cables and telephone messages. We have gone on doing these things for such an infinite number of times that we now declare with perfect confidence that it invariably acts in such and such manner. Hardly one of us discovered this in the first place; we reached what certainty of knowledge we have by acting as if it were true, observing the invariable results, and establishing in this way, and in this way only, our certitude.

Nobody knows what gravitation is. Long before a wise man stated the law that every particle of matter attracts every other particle in a certain proportion people had been using this force and accurately measuring it by scales.

There is a good deal written in books of science about the laws of chemical affinity, the combinations of oxygen and hydrogen and the like, the existence of atoms and electrons, and the manners and movements of particles of matter so infinitely small that no microscope will ever discover them. Much of this information all intelligent men believe to be exact. But the only way in which any-

body ever reached the conviction that these things are so is by observing that whenever one acts as if they were so the results are dependable and invariable.

When I say, therefore, that I act as if the Christ story were true and that my faith rests upon the results of such action I am thinking just as scientificially and as accurately as a chemist or an electrical expert. I am not building my faith on an airy nothing. I am building it upon the only rock upon which any faith can rest unshaken, the rock of experiments and results.

Any theory that rests merely upon *a priori* reasoning may or may not be true. Our logic apparatus is so imperfect that we cannot depend upon it in the vital issues of life. If all that supports Christianity were the historical documents of the fathers and the logic of the theologians our faith would indeed be a precarious structure. It rests on nothing of the sort. It rests upon the tremendous granite foundation labelled "as if." And the only way you can prove that it is a mistake is to bring along some other "as if" and show that it works better.

William James made a very shrewd definition when he declared that "the truth is what will work." John Dewey's "Reconstruction in Philosophy," one

of the most important books of the last fifty years, emphasizes and explains this. He shows that the error of almost all the philosophers previous to Bacon was that they assumed that the truth was some certain and definite thing, as a stone or a piece of wood, which it is the business of the human mind to discover, which all thinkers were trying to find, and which when found would prove a philosopher's stone and settle all our problems. The fact, however, is that the thing called truth emerges only in experiment and adjustment.

Here is my real problem. I must develop my personality. I must find the right kind of life and discover if I can some force that shall improve life and keep it wholesome, healthy and strong. Christianity comes to me as a great hypothesis that has been tried out one way or another for two thousand years, and now is offered to me rich with all its history of triumph and criticized by all its record of perversions and mistakes. Warned and guided by the errors of the past and intrigued by its record of valuable results, I try it in my own life and find that it works. And in so doing I am acting precisely as you do when you wire your house for electricity, arrange the fixtures

as you have seen others do, turn on the switch and get light.

When you say to me, therefore, that Christianity to you influences your life because you believe that Jesus lived and now lives and that this gives you strength in living and faith in dying, I reply to you that I think I have precisely the same results that you have. The only difference is that you imply that if somebody destroyed your premises you would throw away your conclusion, you argue that you are a Christian because of certain historical facts; while on the contrary the great fact upon which my Christianity rests is the fact that this story now exists and has existed for many years in the world, that no higher criticism or anything else tinkering with the record can take away this fact, that this fact furnishes me with a tremendous hypothesis, and that my faith is founded upon the fact that I have tried this hypothesis and find that it works. I do not see that we have anything to quarrel about. The main difference seems to be that you sometimes grow alarmed at the effort of unbelievers to upset your foundation, but my foundation is of a sort that neither believers nor unbelievers can possibly upset. You might conceivably prove, or think you could prove, that the Christ

story was wholly or in part fictitious; no one outside of Bedlam could possibly prove that the Christ story and the influence of its central figure is not right here now operating among men, making human beings happier or more efficient, furnishing the best element of ethical culture, constituting the principal force in social evolution, and standing like a lighthouse upon the shores of that sea of death where nothing else, whether fact or hypothesis, can disclose anything but the fogs of uncertainty, can make us hear anything else than the moaning waves and fearful breakers of eternal darkness.

I Am a Christian Because Christ's Appeal Is to Mankind, and Not to One Race or Nation

"Jesus was the only teacher tall enough to see over the fences that divide the human race into compartments."

I Am a Christian Because Christ's Appeal Is to Mankind, and Not to One Race or Nation

THERE is no patriotism in Jesus. While the world still has thousands of years to go to get rid of the nation myth the mind of Jesus was clean of it.

Nations of course have their place in the evolution of social life. Nationalism is an improvement upon feudalism. But the nation idea is a half-way house and not a stopping place. For humanity is not going to be permanently organized for the general welfare until it is organized as a world for the benefit of all the people in it.

It is because we are still under the darkness of the nation myth that we have continual wars, and it is only when we shall organize the world into a Federation of Nations that we shall get rid of war. For a world of independent nations automatically produces war and a world of organized nations, where force is relegated to a representative and delegated body, would automatically avoid war.

In all the argument that is now being made concerning the League of Nations the most potent and convincing thing is the unspoken and silent influence of the spirit and ideas of Jesus Christ.

And I cannot avoid believing that in the end He will have His way.

Jesus was the one teacher tall enough to see over all the fences that divide the human race into compartments. He saw that no system of ethics can hope to be permanent unless it is based upon the whole human race. His religion and morality is bound up with no special stock; it is no more Anglo-Saxon than it is Japanese, no more French or German than it is Malay or African. It is human.

As I grow older and travel about the world, as I meet the people of all nations and observe their strivings, their life and their thoughts, the more it is borne in upon me that the arch heresy of all heresies is provincialism.

When one race or nation or sect or stratum of society gets into its head that it is the Elect, the Chosen People, and that all other peoples are created to give way before them or to minister to them, there is always trouble ahead. The inevitable consequence of that sort of thinking is a French Revolution, a German nation going mad and starting a world war, the downfall of the Czar and the red waves of Bolshevism, always some such thing.

Wherever Christianity is "established" it be-

comes more or less grotesque. The ceremonies of the Church which predominate in Europe are very little different from the ceremonies of Buddhism in Asia. The Christianity of the Established Church of England, its precedences, its curious caste system, its semi-Romanism are amusing to those who have never been trained in its performances from their youth up. And the religious life of the Protestant Churches of the United States is often grotesque and strangely formalized. It will be interesting to see what will happen to Christianity when it has conquered the Orient. Perhaps it will get from the East some reaction that will save it from asphyxiation in the West. But the point of all this is that no kind of Christianity can be genuine unless it is absolutely universal, as applicable to a black man as a white, to one type of civilization as to another. Exclusiveness of any kind perverts Christianity. It cannot be kept wholesome except it be universal.

I Am a Christian Because Jesus' Teachings Are Universally Applicable

"Jesus is the great Master Artist in the Business of Getting Along. He alone of all teachers saw the great laws which men must eventually observe in society."

I Am a Christian Because Jesus' Teachings Are Universally Applicable

I REALIZE that this statement is verbose, but it is the best I can do. What I mean is that the teachings of Jesus are those of the only master whose system brings success not only to me but to everybody else. He does not show me how to succeed at the expense of other people, but rather in such a way as shall bring as much profit and content to them as to myself.

Kant's Categorical Imperative was, in substance, that we should so act as we conceive all other men ought to act. That is, the ethical test of the righteousness of anything we do is to imagine it done universally. Christ's doctrine comes nearest meeting this test.

There can be little doubt that if every person in the world would adopt the principles of Jesus most of humanity's troubles and heartbreaks would disappear. If any considerable number of people in a community adopt these principles the whole community is profoundly leavened.

If the nations of the world should take the principles of Jesus Christ for their guidance there would be no more war, the vast burdens of debt and taxation would be lifted and the welfare of the human

race would be immeasurably promoted. No one denies this. Of course no nation was ever founded on the principles of Jesus. Every one of them is founded upon the delusion of force. But the only reason why any one nation does not immediately adopt Jesus' ideas is that none of the others have adopted them and no single nation has the vision and intelligence sufficient courageously to go it alone. It matters not that the anti-Christian theories upon which every nation is founded have been proven without exception to be disastrous and eventually to bring ruin in every case; we continue to believe and to follow the devil because we are childish and afraid. When the world grows up and becomes adult-minded enough to understand the practical wisdom of Jesus' policy it will look back upon our present age and be amazed that the nations wallowed so long in the slough of barbarism.

There is no doubt that if the principles of Jesus were applied in our industrial life, such things as strikes, lock-outs and the like would disappear. It is a curious thing to note how following Jesus in business is supposed to be impractical, while the refusal to follow Him, as demonstrated every day, does not work at all. A man from Mars might

wonder why the world would not try the plan of Jesus for, say, at least a space of five years, just as an experiment. Affairs could hardly be worse than they are now.

If the program of Jesus were to be followed in any family, immediately all friction would disappear, tragedies would be confined to the accidents of nature,

> "And the cares that infest the day
> Would fold their tents like the Arabs
> And silently steal away."

If everybody would follow Jesus all the work of the world would be flooded with song and cheer, and all the play would be such as to leave no harvest of remorse.

Jesus is the great master Artist in the business of Getting Along. He alone of all teachers saw the great laws which men must eventually observe in society. As far as the wisdom of His teaching is concerned it does not matter that so few practice it; just to the extent that every man does practice it the condition of himself and his neighbors is improved.

And the world has demonstrated over and over again for two thousand years and is demonstrating every day continually that no plan for getting

along, no system of human relations, except that of Jesus will work. Humanity has tried such systems as Master and Slave, but Slavery blew up in bloodshed. It has tried the plan of Monarch and Subject, but one by one the Monarchies of the earth have broken down. Men have tried the relation of Employer and Wage Earner, but that system dependent on maintaining an equilibrium between two enormous forces of selfishness can hardly be called entirely satisfactory. They have tried the various theories of Socialism, Bolshevism, Communism, and the like in which the effort has been made to solve the problem of human relations in terms of property and material things.

Not one of these systems has worked with satisfaction except in so far as they have borrowed from the plan of Jesus. And whenever the plan of Jesus has been tried honestly it has always worked. That is, human beings can only get along permanently as brothers.

Surely a teacher of such extraordinary practical wisdom is worthy to be taken as a Master.

I Am a Christian Because Christianity Is the Only Force in the World at Present That Gives Promise of World Organization

"And I state with the utmost sincerity that I can see no hope for humanity except in the spread of the principles of Jesus."

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SOME sort of World Organization is absolutely necessary, if we are not all headed for chaos. The existing system of Nationalism will, unless it can develop a strong Internationalism, automatically produce another Great War, more horrible than the last.

I can find no more luminous illustration of what I mean than a letter written by Charles Wood, of *Collier's Weekly* for Heywood Broun's column in the New York *World.*

A particularly cynical and septic play called "Rain" was given in New York. It caricatured the missionary. In a discussion of missionaries the following letter appeared:

"Defending missionaries is too much like defending Socialists or Americans or women. Almost anything you say about them might be denied with reason by somebody who knows one. I will not therefore attempt a wholesale defence. I know about one hundred of them intimately. They are mostly American Protestants and they are all located in China. I am not a Christian. I'm as far

away from the Church as a man can get. But I can say for this one hundred that they comprise the biggest, broadest, most worthwhile aggregation of human beings with whom I have ever come in contact.

"They are not all alike. A few of them—my impression is that the breed is scarce—seemed to think that their mission in life was to teach the Chinese a new way to get their sins forgiven. Some others were bent on teaching what they believed to be a superior moral code. The vast majority were only moderately interested, if at all, either in theology or ethics, but were in China solely because China gave them an opportunity to live a complete life of service. These men and women for the most part, did not drink, smoke, toddle, or play cards, but they didn't attach the slightest value to these abstinences.

"They loved the Chinese; and helping a Chinese waif get through school, or co-operating with a Chinese family to unbind the feet of a lot of little girls, so that they could run and play and dance if they wanted to, amused these missionaries much more than they could be amused by an ace full or a million dollar cocktail. The tourists who were so bored with life that they had come to look upon

time as an enemy which they had to kill, seldom seemed to understand this. They found the missionaries difficult, alien. They couldn't talk with them, they often told me. This is not surprising, considering the range of the average tourist's talk.

"I expect the missionaries to be criticized. There is every reason why they should be criticized by the guarantors of things as they are. It seems incongruous, however, that they should be jumped upon by that small coterie of Americans who actually do believe in the dissemination of ideas. The real missionary is necessarily a revolutionist. He cannot be a narrow nationalist, for he believes in the kingdom of heaven on earth. He cannot go strong on the preservation of our institutions, for he believes that the whole world of Mammon must be destroyed. Neither can he whoop it up very loudly for 'the faith of our fathers.'

"In other words, the typical missionary is a typical 'foreign agitator.' It is fitting that he should be damned by those who damn foreign agitators here—by those who appeal to bigotry and nationalism and local prejudices in order to keep the rest of us from criticising the institutions which our holy forefathers have wished upon us.

"One other point, even if I take up your whole

column. This world is in a very precarious situation. The war which was to fix everything right didn't pan out very well. Patriotism fluked. The international scramble for markets is going on, and every nation is doing all it can to embarrass every other nation with tariffs, special agreements, etc. In other words, we're still in a state of war; and unless we hit upon a different scheme for world organization we shall soon exterminate ourselves.

"The only practical scheme I know of is the one which is being advanced in the one country where it counts most. China is the least nationalistic of all great countries on earth. It is probably the most highly cultured. Modern industrialism and the modern state have not made much headway there as yet. In this situation the American missionaries are preaching the gospel of organization for service instead of for commercial advantage. They are not only preaching it; they are practicing it, and it works beautifully.

"They are practically the only foreigners in China who are close to the Chinese people, and they didn't attain this position through their preaching. They attained it through their service—through their demonstration of the practicality of the social teachings of Jesus, regardless of how one prefers

to get his sins forgiven. They are preaching this gospel, moreover, as a principle of world organization.

"I am no Christian theologically, but I do know that the world must organize on this principle. The American missionaries in China seem to me to have the key to world redemption. If America could only understand this and get behind them, we would soon have no further use for war."

I am a member of the human race, an inhabitant of this world and a citizen of the United States of America. Consequently I am interested in the future of these three things.

And I state with the utmost sincerity that I can see no hope for humanity except in the spread of the principles of Jesus.

Woodrow Wilson and Warren G. Harding, both of whom occupied the position of President of the United States and certainly are competent witnesses, declared in substance that the greatest agency for national prosperity and human welfare is the spread of the belief and practice of the principles of Christ.

This, however, is not a matter to be settled by quoting authorities. Common sense tells us that

any great power is dangerous unless it is accompanied by an intelligent control of that power.

The power of mankind is increasing at a tremendous rate; by the advance of science and the multiplication of inventions we are strengthening the human arm.

Something must be done at the same time to strengthen the intelligent control of that arm, or we are merely developing the strength of a dangerous giant.

Dr. Caldwell ("Science Remaking the World") recently said:

"Science knowledge, scientific processes and appliances, have reached the stage where ignorance means danger, sometimes destruction. The airplane which won the war has exacted the life of many of those who persisted in flying. Poison gases and other war inventions are so terrible that it is not even safe to allow all citizens to know what a few inquisitive and trusted scientific men have discovered. If a bio-chemico-physicist were to discover just how to change electrical potentials over an area twenty miles square so that the electrons of human protoplasm would instantly break down, it would not as yet be morally safe for the

different nations to have possession of this secret. In the presence of modern science those who do not know cannot long survive. Exact knowledge provides large obligations. But the still larger one —without which modern science is dangerous— asks that intellectual and moral ideals and controls shall develop in harmony with growth in possession of scientific knowledge."

The gist of all this is that, as Sanderson of Oundle put it, human progress is a race between education and catastrophe.

A more exact statement is that unless the moral inhibitions keep pace with physical and intellectual powers the human race will destroy itself.

This is no theoretical bugaboo. That we will have another war is about as certain, at the time of this writing, as that the sun will rise tomorrow.

For the only reason that we believe the sun will rise tomorrow is that it always has risen regularly. And anyone who reads history knows that the present system of world governments always has produced war at certain regular intervals, that is, just as soon as enough wealth had been stored up with which to make war.

The only moral force that I know of in the world

that can force nations into such an organization as shall prevent war is Christianity.

No more appalling omission of duty, no greater criminal weakness has ever been manifested by the Churches of Jesus Christ than their failure to get unanimously and enthusiastically behind the League of Nations, and thus prevent war in the only way it can possibly be prevented.

And the only thing that can create and develop a public sentiment that shall compel the nations to abandon the present system of preparing for war, organizing for war and thus bringing on war, is the spirit of Jesus Christ and sufficiently widespread belief in the truth which He uttered.

Destiny is a ruthless teacher. It may be, and it looks at present very much as though it surely will be, that Destiny will be compelled to wipe out the greater portion of what we call Civilization in order to teach men what they seem to be able to learn in no other way, to wit: that the automatic and inevitable end of reliance upon force is chaos and ruin.

For, in the next war, there will be no conflict between armies contending on the frontier. It will be a war of airplanes and poison gases, a war char-

acterized not by conquering armies but by exterminating whole populations.

The Gospel of Jesus seems very gentle and sweet, but in reality it conceals teeth and claws. Proud, stupid and opinionated men may smile at His recommendations of brotherhood, co-operation, helpfulness and love, but sooner or later they find that a contempt for these recommendations results in hell on earth, whether or not it eventuates in hell hereafter.

I am a Christian, therefore, because I am thoroughly convinced that it is a clear alternative between obeying the wisdom of Jesus or bringing all the proud results of civilization down into the pit.

I Am a Christian Because, to Me, Jesus Is the Most Adult Minded of All Mankind's Teachers

"Jesus seems to me to be the only great thinker who was completely grown up."

I Am a Christian Because, to Me, Jesus Is the Most Adult Minded of All Mankind's Teachers

JESUS seems to me to be the only great thinker who was completely grown up. He alone seems to have entirely shed the crudities and delusions of immaturity.

Jesus seems to be far in advance of all other thinkers. We cannot think of Him as a point in the past, but rather as a beacon light of the future. We are not going on from Him, we are going toward Him. It is hardly a happy simile to speak of Him as the "Church's one Foundation," because the Church is not so much like a building as it is like a tree. It grows, shedding its errors, putting out new buds. I like the picture, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches," better than "On this rock will I build my Church."

The Child Mind is enveloped in delusions. The Child thinks the earth is flat for the best of reasons. The kind of reason we rely on constantly, —Common Sense. Common Sense tells him it is flat.

"Why," he says, "just look at it! Anyone can see it is flat. I can run along it, without going

up hill. Automobiles go upon it. If it were round they would fall off."

This is excellent reasoning. There is only one trouble with it. It is not true. No grown-up believes it. We all know the earth is round like an orange.

But none of us ever found that out for himself. Somebody had to tell you and me. That is Education. For Education consists in correcting the errors of Common Sense.

The child and the savage believe the sun revolves around the earth. This belief is based upon the best of grounds, the grounds of common sense. Anyone can see the sun get up in the morning, make his appointed round in the heavens, and set at night. This illustrates perfectly the apparent certainty, but the real error, that lies in the conclusions of common sense. For when we go to school we learn that the sun does not revolve around the earth but is, comparatively speaking, fixed, while the earth revolves around it.

These illustrations are given because they are types of the sort of spiritual delusions under which the mind of mankind rests. It is from these delusions all our difficulties come.

We have trouble in the family, trouble with our

friends, trouble with our neighbors, trouble between nations, all kinds of trouble simply because we cannot see. We are in the dark. We are as blind men groping. Hence we bump into each other, bruise and destroy each other.

It is safe to say that if we could simply see clearly, the major part of the misery would disappear from the earth.

The trouble with humanity is not so much that it is sinful or devilish as that it is child-minded. It has not grown up. It acts in the most stupid and absurd way because it doesn't know any better.

The wastrel, the drunkard, the profligate, the sensualist, are not so much malicious or vicious spirits as they are cases of arrested development. They imagine that the pleasures obtained from the immediate gratifications of their lusts are all the satisfaction there is for them. They are like children gorging themselves upon sweets and making themselves sick. What they need is knowledge.

Those who are unhappy, morbid, discontented and self-pitying are under a delusion. They also are like spoiled children who haven't sense enough to discipline themselves and get out of the muck of gloom and self-torture. The way is plain but they cannot see it.

The same thing is true of men collectively. Nations are continually at war. They groan under enormous burdens of war taxation. And they suffer all this simply because they are child-minded. They cannot see the wisdom of co-operation.

Patriotism, instead of being an adult and noble desire to work for the welfare of one's country, to make that country of the greatest possible service to the world, is conceived of in most minds in terms of hatred of another country and a desire to conquer. So the world lumbers along like a developing child learning to walk.

It is in the teachings of Jesus that we find that perfect clarity of vision which enables us to see through these delusions and thus live our lives with poise and contentment.

Let us now consider some of the elements of Christ's teaching and example which show His adult-mindedness and how He not only penetrated the common delusions of mankind but saw those truths clearly which mankind is just beginning to glimpse.

BY FOLLOWING JESUS I AM
RESCUED FROM THE GREAT
DELUSIONS THAT HAVE
BLINDED MANKIND

"The trouble with humanity is not that it is wicked; it is that it is immature."

The Delusion That Human Nature Is Evil

"The world God said He loved was not a Christian world. All its people were just plain ordinary human beings. God loved them and thought they had sense enough to understand what He told them. So do I."

The Delusion That Human Nature Is Evil

IT is rather a common opinion that human beings are naturally bad. They are declared to be prone to evil as the sparks fly upward.

This arises from the fact that life is conditioned upon struggle and only develops well when it is a continual forthputting. That is the law of all life, that of the beast, the bird, the fish, the plant, the soul. It is because life itself is a force, and that force is directed toward using, dominating and organizing lifeless matter. The child mind of the race conceived of those things against which life has to struggle as being wicked or evil. This is because when a living organism does not struggle, it is overcome by matter and other organisms and is destroyed.

This idea has got itself rather firmly fixed in theology. David cried out that he was born in sin and in iniquity did his mother conceive him. Another Hebrew exclaimed that the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. This was because the Hebrew was strongly endowed spiritually and was alive to the keenness of the contest which the spirit has to undergo in order to develop. It was this that gave the Hebrews such a vivid conception of sin.

When the logic makers of the Church began to handle Scripture texts they found plenty of them to support their contention that men are naturally devilish and can only be made decent by some supernatural touch.

To my mind this point of view is not in accordance with a rational conception of the universe.

I believe that all men are imperfect. They have in themselves instincts and desires that need coordination, control and proper development.

Sin is disorder. Sin is a weakness of those moral inhibitions which ought to function, to govern and regulate the desires.

While we all want to do things that are evil, at the same time we all have a conscience that tells us they are evil and we want to be better.

The belief is almost universal that being good is difficult and the good person is a sort of unnatural and inhuman creature, while vice is thought to be attractive and natural and human.

Poor old human nature has been belabored until very few people believe in it. I believe in it wholly. I think that Jesus believed in it, because He appealed to it. He seemed to take it for granted that people wanted to do right and were anxious to find out how.

It is the starting point in most of our creeds that virtue is unpleasant and vice is alluring. We begin inculcating this lie to our children. We say, for instance, to Johnny, aged seven, "If you are a good boy and do not do anything naughty, I will give you a stick of candy." The assumption here is that being good is disagreeable and the only way we can lure the child to it is by some artificial stimulant. And we say, "If you are bad, Johnny, I will spank you." The assumption here is that Johnny naturally wants to do what is wrong, that he loves evil and that the only way to keep him from it is to hurt him. So we are at great pains to get this wrong idea into our children, feeding it into them at one end and pounding it into them at the other.

My own notion is that everybody wants to do right. This want may be feeble or strong, but it is there. And it is the business of religion to get hold of it and develop it. I think the most unpardonable sin is steadily to tell a child that he is wicked until by and by he gets to believe it himself. If we assume that he is good and that he wants to do right, there is a probability that he will be good. If we always tell him he is bad, he will try to live up to our opinion.

The great force in moral education is appreciation. And the greatest force toward ruining character is depreciation.

The people to whom Jesus addressed the Sermon on the Mount were not Christians. The world which He said He loved was not a Christian world. All these people were just plain, ordinary human beings. He loved them and He thought they had sense enough to understand what He told them. He addressed His message to them and they heard Him gladly. They have been hearing Him gladly ever since.

He said that if He were lifted up He would draw all men toward Him. He could not draw men toward Him unless there was something in them that responded to His appeal.

He was called the friend of sinners. And one of the charges the Pharisees laid against Him is the same charge that ever since then has been laid against those who dared to believe in the natural goodness of human nature. It was that He associated with publicans and sinners.

I not only believe that every woman wants to be decent and every man wants to be fair, but I believe that the great trouble with all of our human relations is that we refuse to believe this. One coun-

try makes war upon another, at the same time actively circulating the propaganda that the people of the other nation are brutes and cowards. Labor and capital quarrel and each side earnestly tries to represent the other as composed of rascals and greedy scoundrels.

Children are alienated from their parents, wives and husbands are separated, churches are divided and neighborhoods drift into feuds, mainly because one party gets the settled conviction that the other party is intrinsically bad. The world indeed can only be saved by faith. But it is not only faith in God that it needs, but it is faith in mankind.

The Apostle John asks if we do not love our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen?

The assumption in this statement, that man is a godlike sort of thing, is one that I heartily believe.

This is not a mere opinionated optimism. I think that it is the most intelligent and scientific point of view. It squares with evolution and it is in harmony with the general attitude of Jesus. It is not in harmony with some of the things that Paul said, that the ancient Hebrew prophets said. But I think that Jesus had a clearer vision than any of them.

The Delusion of Punishment

"Rewards and punishments, the two most arrant humbugs of the world, still delude us."

The Delusion of Punishment

THE erroneous idea that self-interest is the spring of human conduct and that all people are naturally prone to evil and can only be kept in check by artificial restraint, permeates all our thinking.

Rewards and Punishments, the two arrant humbugs of the world, still delude us. This fundamental delusion underlies all of our criminal law, which is based upon the psychological absurdity that the way to prevent men from doing wrong is to hurt them. It is this fallacy that underlies all our system of police, and courts, and prisons.

Our criminal courts are misnamed Courts of Justice. They should be called Courts of Vengeance. If a man has defrauded or committed violence, we know of nothing to do with him except to cause him pain. While we no longer make a practice of torturing him on the rack, hanging him up by his thumbs, beating him to insensibility, or drawing and quartering him, we still torture him by shutting him up in a filthy cell, or taking his life.

The sentiment which actuates this is not that of justice, but of vengeance. It is the same feeling that causes a brutal driver to kick his horse in the

belly when the animal will not go, or causes the little boy to get a hatchet and chop the piano when he has bumped his head on it.

Justice means the establishment of right conditions, and the abatement of pernicious and perverted motives. So long as we cling to the heresy of punishment our harassed minds are unable to see, by the records of the facts in the case, or by the chronicles of history, that our present system increases crime and does not decrease it.

The plain facts should show us this, if we had eyes to see them. For the prisons of the civilized world reform nobody. I have been in prison work myself, being for two or three years on the Parole Board in Illinois, and am somewhat acquainted with the work of prisons. I have examined the cases of some three thousand persons. I have talked with wardens and deputies. I never heard of a case in my life where prison punishment or pain took the criminality out of a man. On the contrary, prisons train men in criminality and have been very properly called by an authority "crucibles of crime."

The prisons of the United States, instead of abating crime, turn out every year some 110,000 graduates from the university of crime.

When a man has committed a crime, let us say a felonious attack, he is simply a diseased man, as much so as if he had pneumonia. His mental and moral works are out of order. It does him, or anybody else, no good to debase him with punishment, so that he becomes more out of order. A rational proceeding would be to send him to a hospital, not to a prison. That is to say, to a place where he could be cured, made better, or at least restrained, and not to a place where he is to be hurt and made worse. What he needs is not to be guarded like an animal by a turnkey, for what is the matter with him is that he is already too much of an animal. He needs to be treated like a human being, by a physician.

We are never going to get the treatment of criminals upon a sensible basis until we turn the criminal over to a psychiatrist and not to a slave driver.

Jesus perceived the fallacy and the utter inutility of vengeance. When He spoke of turning the other cheek He did not imply that the world should be handed over to the violent or the criminal, but that evil people should be treated with intelligence as inferiors, and not fought as equals.

It is quite a common delusion that we are pro-

tected by police and soldiers, sheriffs and other officers of the law. The average man thinks that it is safe for his women to walk the streets and that he is not in danger of being murdered in his bed, because policemen are standing around with clubs and revolvers.

A little reflection would show us the fallacy of this idea. For suppose that every person in your city wanted to commit crime. Suppose that everyone was bad and was only looking for an opportunity to perpetrate some outrage of arson, mayhem, rape or murder. If everyone wanted to do such things, not all the police in Christendom nor all the standing armies of the world could prevent your city from being burned down and thrown into chaos before the end of the week.

The real policemen of the city are the moral inhibitions in the minds of the people. You are safe simply because the great mass of the people do not want to commit crime, and they do want to be decent. And all your police do is to restrain the small minority of perverts.

Our confidence in the effectiveness of prisons, pillories, whipping posts, the *auto da fé* and the electric chair as preventives of crime is of a piece

with our confidence in hell fire as a preventive of sin. One is as useless as the other.

For ages men took it for granted that human beings could not be kept in the paths of righteousness unless they were frightened by stories of hell! As Burns wrote,

> "The Fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
> To haud the wretch in order."

God was degraded to the position of a prison turnkey. The devil, whom at least God allowed to exist, was in charge of the business of torturing souls. For centuries mankind labored under the effects of this fear.

Gradually the healthy mind of the human race has gotten out from under this shadow. Few intelligent people today believe in this hideous theory.

Current theology was based on the idea that God was an intolerant tyrant whose chief concern was that everybody must strictly obey Him. He cared so much for this that He intended to torture forever and ever those souls that refused. Jesus, in some magical way, stepped in between the wrath of God and humanity so that if you believed the right creed and performed the proper rites, you could escape hell. But curiously enough it was God Himself that sent Jesus to do this.

This tangled scheme of mixed motives on the part of the Deity was confidently believed for many years. It all arises from the same delusion; to wit, that human beings are bad by nature and the only way to save them is to threaten them with punishments and tempt them with rewards. Once the premise was allowed, the conclusion logically follows.

I do not believe this. I think that God loves His world quite as much as Jesus did. I believe that the great purpose of the Deity is to raise up humanity to higher levels. He is the great Gardener and we are the plants in His garden. He is growing His universe.

Fear has its place as a normal instinct. Its purpose has been best defined by Basil King, who said that fear is the challenge to life, that fear is given us in order to stimulate us to effort, for without effort life cannot develop. But fear that has been turned from its right purpose of stimulation and made into a means of paralysis is a perversion.

In other words, I think that punishment as a motive of conduct is altogether a delusion. Fear and sense of danger may be a wholesome challenge.

And I do not think that the chief concern of God is to secure the obedience of His creatures; His chief concern is to make them grow.

The Delusion That Competition Is Essential to Progress

"Mankind has obtained its excellence by co-operation, not by combat."

The Delusion That Competition Is Essential to Progress

COMPETITION, struggle and the effort to overcome obstacles are essential to life. They are necessary in order to develop vigor.

But the fallacy is, that competition is necessary between men, for the purpose of the production of wealth, and the maintenance of government. The fact is that the struggle against the forces of nature, the forces of decay and degeneration, are essential for the development of human excellence, and in this great struggle men should stand together and work with each other and not against each other.

In the production of food, clothes, shelter and the other material needs of life, men can produce a thousand times more by co-operation than by competition. They can produce enough for everybody. There is a necessary competition in the realm of ideas, but the scientists show us that this can be carried on without bitterness, can be wholly constructive.

We have got the fallacy of competition thoroughly ingrained in our ideas. It seems difficult for us to realize any sort of human good to be obtained without fighting each other.

When we wish to establish justice we do not go

before an impartial judge and have him carefully examine into the rights of the case. Each side hires a lawyer and the two lawyers are pitted against each other after the manner of a cock fight. The judge is merely the referee, and the spectators gather to witness the performance as they would witness a prize fight. The cleverest and most resourceful lawyer wins.

We can hardly work up any enthusiasm in the matter of religion without competition. The greatest stimulation to activity in the Methodist Church in the town is its rivalry with the Baptist Church. The idea of them both pulling together is entirely too mild and watery to arouse much interest.

We cannot even run our Government by intelligently selecting the best officials according to their deserts. We must have two parties. We must inject into the election campaign the elements of war. We must have our quadrennial cock fight in order to select our chief executive and his assistants.

Nations have hard work to co-operate. They find it easy enough to antagonize each other. In fact, the usual gauge of one's Simon-pure, red-blooded Americanism, is the degree to which he hates the English, German, Japanese or Mexican. One of

the septic by-products of organization is the premium it pays on Hate. It is always easier to organize men to hate someone than to love someone. That is the reason why the rulers of the country are glad to have a war every once in a while. When war comes the entire nation is unified. The child-minded people love fighting so much that in times of peace they fight each other.

All this is an indication of the imperfection of the race, and evidence of the slightness of our present degree of evolution away from the beast.

Some color has been lent to this high value placed upon contention by arguing that it is a law of Nature, that Nature produces her best products by struggle and the survival of the fittest. It is a law that holds good among cabbages and caterpillars, among lions, dogs and snakes. But with the appearance of Man upon the planet, and with the development of the human qualities, that law ceases to operate.

Mankind has obtained its excellence by co-operation, not by combat.

We have learned this lesson partially but not wholly. We have demonstrated it on a small scale but are unable to grasp it on a universal scale. We form labor unions because we discover that laborers

get more by working in harmony than by cutting each other's throats. In the commercial world we form combinations because we find out that combined capital is infinitely more effective than scattered capital. Almost all of the great fortunes of these times have been made by men who have had the genius of co-ordination. The wealth of Rockefeller, Carnegie, Woolworth, and like merchant princes, have been made not because they struggled against others but because they had vision enough to see how to get others to join them. Great prosperity is always the result of combination.

It was the perception of this truth that induced the emphasis Jesus put upon Brotherhood. Men are infinitely better off when they all stand together. This is the practical significance of the command of Jesus that we should love one another. For that command does not mean that we are to indulge merely in a sickly sentimentalism toward each other, but it means that we are to abandon the law of the pack, the law of the wolves, and take up the more intelligent law of human beings.

It is the dim recognition that humanity will never get along until it learns to co-operate, that underlies the crude theories and experiments of Socialism.

At present human beings can only get together

in little groups, as a Church, or a lodge, or club, or association, or some such thing. The time is coming when the mist shall be more fully dissipated from before our eyes and we shall co-operate as human beings everywhere.

This is undeniably the trend of social evolution, and it seems to me to be a marvelous thing, that two thousand years ago this Galilean peasant should have perceived this cosmic law, and boldly stated it, centuries before Mankind had begun to grasp it.

The Delusion That Happiness Is Obtainable

"Happiness does not consist in getting something; it consists in becoming something."

The Delusion That Happiness Is Obtainable

THE prevailing idea is that Happiness consists in getting something. The true idea is that Happiness consists in being something. In other words, Happiness is not anything at all; it is a relation between two things.

Carlyle expressed this in "Sartor Resartus," by saying that Happiness is as the value of a common fraction, of which the numerator is what you have and the denominator is what you think you ought to have.

The deluded seek to increase the value of the fraction by multiplying the numerator. The wise, by dividing the denominator.

The basic doctrine of Jesus was conversion. "Ye must be born again." In other words, to be happy we must be changed ourselves, and any happiness that consists merely in the change of our possessions or our environment is fictitious. This is the idea that underlies His command that we should not lay up our treasure on earth. Most of us are engaged in the Sisyphus task of getting more money, more fame, or higher position. But what every man really desires is to make the most that he can out of his life; to live that life as joyously,

as fully, and as freely as possible. And in order to do this his first task should be to adjust himself.

And he should not postpone life, or postpone the joy of life. This is why Jesus warns against laying up treasure on earth, or placing dependence on riches. For the trouble with this is, that it means a postponement of life's realities. We are to be happy as we go along and not to wear our lives out in wretchedness so as to be happy after awhile. The great mistake most people make in the conception of the mission of Jesus is that His purpose was to establish some sort of iron perfection of righteousness, or some inhuman perfection of holiness, or something else that is alien to, or contrary to, human nature. The real purpose of Jesus was, as He stated Himself, that "our joy might be full." He came to teach us how to be happy, how to live our lives and get the most out of them. And those today who catch His spirit, and follow His teachings, do actually attain to the richest and fullest life. Only has one to visit those whose happiness depends upon riches, or position or notoriety to see how unstable and hollow is their attainment. It seems to me that in nothing is Jesus' wisdom more manifest than in His perception of this, and His real knowledge of human nature.

The Delusion That Goodness Is Negative

"Christianity is not a deadening force but a quickening force."

The Delusion That Goodness Is Negative

THE world has always been under the delusion that goodness is negative.

In the parable of the Last Judgment, those who are rewarded are those who *did* something and those who are sent away to punishment are those who *did not* do something.

This principle runs through all of Jesus' teachings. With Him righteousness was strength and helpfulness. The very basis of all His ethics was Love, and Love is a positive and not a negative thing.

If you inquire of the average person today what a righteous man is he will, in nine cases out of ten, proceed to tell you that it is a man who does *not* do certain things; one who does not lie, or swear, or cheat or commit adultery.

I remember once asking a friend who was the best man he ever knew.

"My father," he replied.

"Why," I inquired.

"Because," he returned, "he never used profane language, he never broke the Sabbath, he never drank liquor nor used tobacco in any form, he never had any affair with a woman, and to the best of my knowledge he never cheated nor told a lie."

"That," I answered, "meaning of course no disrespect to your father, is a very good description of a fence post. What I would like to know is what DID he do?"

The churches are full of prohibitions. The favorite command of moralists is "Thou shalt not." Of course, there is no vitality in that sort of teaching. No one can build a character out of negatives.

Jesus changed the whole morality over from the Mosaic code of prohibition, and declared that the sum of the whole law was included in "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbor as thyself."

That is to say, Jesus' conception of rightness was that it is a dynamic something, a leavening force and power.

All those objections that have been raised against Christianity to the effect that it produces mollycoddles and emphasizes weakness and negation, are really criticisms against the Church and do not hold against its Founder. The Church has always said "don't." Jesus' word was "do."

As a matter of fact righteousness is the great adventure. To be a good man requires courage, initiative and great powers of endurance.

To be a sinner requires nothing. Anybody can be a slob. All anyone needs to do in order to go

to the devil is to do nothing at all, for going to the devil is merely another term for degeneration. When a plant ceases to grow it begins to rot.

The most heathenish and outlandish sin of which the organized Church has been guilty has been in creating the impression that piety consists in locking oneself up and abstaining from the world.

To be good, according to Christ's program, is to fight here, to take up one's cross daily, to fear not, to love much, to hold on, and to put forth vigor in every way.

It is most unfortunate that the world has got the impression that the good man is weak, effeminate and cowardly. Being a Christian has been made synonymous with respectability. The Church has cried out "Come in and conform," but conformity is the very essence of sin. Doing like other people around you do is the very surest way of going to the devil.

One cannot carry out the spirit of Jesus without emphasizing his own individuality, being true to his own conscience, following his own convictions, and altogether going the narrow way, and not the broad way that leads to destruction.

What Christ urged was transformation. What the heathenism that has borrowed His name urges, is conformation.

The Delusion That Force Is Effective

"They that take the sword shall perish by the sword."

The Delusion That Force Is Effective

THE world has always persisted in believing in the effectiveness of material force. Jesus penetrated this error and saw that the only effective force is spiritual, that is, the force that is behind ideas.

The world has pinned its faith to the maxim, "God is on the side of the strongest battalions." It has retained this faith with an insane fanaticism. History has proved over and over again that this is not true. As far back as the records go, we see nations indulging in "preparedness" for war, and depending upon that to save themselves. With not one solitary exception they have all been lost. Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Greece, Rome and all the other nations of the ancient world depended for their stability upon their armies and every one of them was destroyed.

That same program has been carried down to the present day. It is exemplified in the recent downfall of the empires of Germany and Russia.

Nothwithstanding this, every nation still pins its faith to arms. Even in Christendom not one nation has vision enough to trust its destiny to the wisdom of Jesus. All are depending upon the wisdom of Macchiavelli.

But five thousand years of recorded history prove that "they that take the sword shall perish by the sword."

The only nation that has lived through the centuries, the oldest nation in the world that has maintained a continuous civilization, is China. And China never had a standing army until the other nations forced her to get one some sixty or seventy years ago.

The curious part of all this is that those who see this fact and state it are called theorists, sneeringly referred to as pacifists and considered impractical. And those who go on making the same mistake that has been made throughout the ages, a mistake that has been demonstrated to be foolish over and over again, are considered practical.

It is as if all the cripples and diseased of the world were regarded as sensible, hard-headed fellows, and all the healthy citizens were denounced as mollycoddles.

The same twisted view is often held by loose-thinking minds in regard to the principle of evolution, the survival of the fittest. They assume that the survival of the fittest means the survival of the fiercest and strongest. The facts do not carry out any such theory.

For instance, some years ago I spent a winter in Los Angeles and was much interested in the work of the scientists there who were digging in the asphalt beds. There they discovered the bones of many prehistoric animals. These had been caught in the asphalt as they came down to the pools to drink and their bones had been preserved for thousands of years.

One of these animals which the scientists reconstructed from a few discovered bones was called the tyrannosaurus. It must have been a formidable monster for it was around forty feet long and eighteen feet high, protected by an impenetrable hide and endowed with a ferocious, carnivorous appetite. It could, and did, lick all comers. It destroyed and devoured any kind of living thing it could catch.

Time passed its judgment upon this monster. If the survival of the fittest means the survival of the fiercest, the world today should be peopled with tyrannosauri. As a matter of fact they are digging this dreadful fellow's bones out of the asphalt beds. And the sheep and oxen, rabbits and squirrels are still with us. Science brings its testimony to the fact that "the meek shall inherit the earth."

Half a century ago the towns in the great west

of the United States were dominated by what was known as the Bad Man. He was a dare-devil, fearless and vicious rascal who would fill up on whiskey and shoot up the town. Everybody was afraid of him. He was the fiercest thing in the community. If survival of the fittest means survival of the fiercest, the towns of western America ought to be populated entirely by Bad Men. But if you visit any of the towns of that region today you will find them populated by the mildest kind of citizens. They wear boiled shirts, keep store and go to church. The Bad Men have disappeared. The only place you can find them now is in the moving picture studios around Los Angeles where they are making dramas to show Europeans American life. The meek have almost exterminated them.

The real, practical and undeniable truth is that reliance upon physical force is the road to ruin. It is true of the individual. It is true of nations. It is true of the world.

And here is a Teacher two thousand years ago that saw this, dared to say it and now after the wise people of earth have sneered at Him for centuries, we are discovering that what He said was about true.

The Delusion That Ethics Can Be Based on the Intellect

"Jesus based morality upon the instincts, the greatest of instincts —Love."

The Delusion That Ethics Can Be Based on the Intellect

THE delusion of the world has been that of trying to base morals upon rationalization or upon self-interest. It has been assumed that a man can reason himself into becoming a moral being or that he can become moral in order to obtain certain advantages for himself.

This will not work. It never has worked. All the morality obtained by such methods is fictitious.

Jesus based morality upon an instinct. He based it upon the greatest of instincts—Love.

In this His wisdom was profound, for all the force there is in man is derived from his instincts and all that the intellect can do is to regulate these instincts.

Love is the latest product of evolution, and the finest. For thousands, perhaps millions of years, life upon the planet has been getting ready for love. Sex is the prelude of love. Away back in the beginnings of time animal life ceased to propagate itself by fission, and sex organisms were developed. With this change came the sex desire. This desire characterizes all of the higher forms of living things.

While this may not be called love in the full sense

of the word, yet it is the foundation of love, it is the soil out of which the lily grows.

In man this feeling in time developed into something higher than the mere libido. It grew into a feeling of altruism and devotion. It produced the finest thing in the world, that force known as love.

We recognize this when we say that God is love. Jesus put it as the basis of all morality when He swept away the rewards and punishments of Moses as motives and substituted for them the one principle of love.

He said of the world in substance, "You are careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful. If you love perfectly you need give yourself no concern about anything else."

The world has never caught up with this bold and revolutionary statement. We still distrust love, we still see in it more danger than advantage.

But love is the only thing that will work. It is the only kind of steam that is safe for the human engine.

The only foundation for the family is love. No considerations of advantage, of rewards and penalties, of self-interest and respectability, or of anything else in the world, can come as near making a happy family as just plain, simple love. Where

man and wife truly love one another, where children and parents love, a thousand problems are dissolved as by magic, problems that in any other way would be insoluble.

Strange to say, love is the only dependable foundation in business. All the efforts of the clever political economists to balance profit and loss and to make the love of gain the only motive in business, end in confusion. As a rule, the only successful men in business are those who love their work, love their co-workers, and love the world, aiming to make their business serve the world. This love may rarely be open and professed, but it exists none the less.

The great trouble between capital and labor is that they do not like each other. When men distrust and hate each other the result is friction and infinite waste. We will cease having strikes and lockouts only when employers and employed shall learn to like one another.

This is not a mere Sunday School doctrine nor a silly piece of sentimentalism. It is the hardest kind of business sense. For it is the way to get along, the way to make money, and altogether the way to prosperity and contentment.

Love is the only foundation of statecraft. It is

the only thing that can eventually prevent war and do away with the unspeakable destruction and evil of war.

At the time of this writing Germany and France are in a deadlock. There is vast loss and suffering on both sides. There are a thousand reasons given for this, but there is only one real reason. They hate each other. The propaganda of hate was carried on so extensively during the war that it has outlasted the war. As long as hate exists its hell crop will flourish. What both France and Germany need is some kind of leaders that will induce the two peoples to respect and to love each other. But the intelligence of both nations is at such a childish level that no such leader can be produced and they are suffering the consequences.

In love there is no excess. We cannot have too much love any more than we can have too much health. When it is said that people love too much, the statement is usually an example of loose thinking. You can have too much lust, you can have too much wounded vanity or jealousy, and you can have too much pride, but you cannot have too much love.

We speak of the sins of love. There are no such things. No man ever wronged a woman because he

loved her too much; the trouble is that he does not love her enough. Whoever loves another cannot wrong him.

The crimes of the world are due to a deficiency in love.

This is a degree of vision few people are able to attain unto. Jesus had it. He said of a woman, "Her sins which are many are forgiven for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

He declared that the way to get the best of your enemies is to love them, for while hate hardens resistance, love dissolves it.

There is something in love that co-ordinates all the other instincts. Where true love is, there all the desires of the body and of the mind fall into harmony.

Love is the only path to greatness. It is the only ladder by which human nature can crawl up into anything like divinity.

Jesus' declaration that the whole fabric of morals rests upon love squares with evolution, with psychology, and with practical common sense and experience.

In no other teacher do I find such an amazing depth of insight.

The Delusion of Safety

"Build your house on the side of a volcano."

NIETZSCHE.

The Delusion of Safety

IT is commonly thought that the purpose of Christianity is to insure our salvation. In other words, to make us safe.

This rests on the assumption that the greatest desire of the human race is to be safe. This is a delusion. Only a very low order of mind wants to be safe. What normal, healthly, human beings want is, to live a full, rich life.

And there is no possibility of living a worthwhile life without danger.

Danger is the soul's greatest friend.

Danger is the twin sister of life. Every living thing is in danger. The only things that are safe are those that are not living. For life itself is a force that is constantly overcoming other forces that seek to extinguish it, and if there were no such other forces life would have no purpose.

To me, the common idea of going to a Heaven where I will never be in peril any more is not at all attractive. If the possibility of ever doing wrong is removed it amounts to the emasculation of the soul. For a man's most godly faculty is his faculty of doing wrong. Indeed there is no merit in doing right, in any creature who is incapable of doing wrong.

The whole idea of Jesus' attitude was opposed to the conventional notion of safety. He exhorted us not to accumulate riches in this world in order to be safe from poverty. He told us to take no thought of the morrow, but to live adventurously. Strangely enough I find this same attitude in one of the greatest critics of Jesus—Nietzsche.

Nietzsche was undoubtedly crazy, but crazy people often say some very wise things.

And Nietzsche was wise when he exhorted men to live dangerously.

"Build your house on the side of a volcano," he said.

There is no such thing as safety.

No matter how your money is invested you can never be absolutely sure that it will not sprout wings and fly away.

No matter how well you take care of your health, you can never be sure that you will be alive tomorrow.

Wherever you find life you find its twin brother, danger.

The only people that are safe in your town are those who are lying out in the graveyard with a stone slab over them.

Life is like riding a bicycle—the only safe thing

to do is to go on. When you stop you have to get off or you will fall off.

Why cannot we accept this as a fixed law of nature, against which it is folly to rail? It would save us infinite disappointment.

The real happiness of life is the happiness that you get as you go on day by day, and that happiness that you dream of as coming in some distant future is like the sunset cloud which is gorgeous because it is far off, but which is nothing but fog when you get to it.

It is well enough to have a goal toward which you work, but you ought to recognize that the greatest joy of the goal is working toward it and not reaching it. Robert Louis Stevenson said that the true blessedness of mortals "is not to arrive but to travel."

Even in our religion we have misconstrued the word "salvation."

That is, we have imagined that the bliss of life consists in getting out of it into some other life beyond the grave. But the bliss of life ought to be living it. Salvation, instead of being something to rescue us from the world, should be something to lift our souls into that sort of character whereby we can live vividly.

Destiny sends us into this existence to work by the day and not by the job. And Destiny's pay is day's wages. It does not come at the end of the job; it is given to us as we go along, if we will take it.

And the happiest people are those who eat their manna fresh daily and do not try to store it up.

A little love, a little work, a little play, a little sleep. That is about all there is to it. And if we can color this with the rainbows of hope, the hues of fancy, and the reflections of wisdom, we shall find life worth living.

Why wait? Why postpone life?

This is not any sort of foolish preachment that we should plunge into sensuality, but rather a most serious exhortation to make daily use of the ideal.

The very earth on which we tread is not set on solid pillars, but whirls like a tenuous bubble through space.

The whole universe is balanced to the nicety of a hair. Nothing is stable, everything flows.

The one thing that is constant is change. The one law of life is growth, and those who get most out of life are those who enjoy to the full that period of life in which they may be set. Let the boy play as a boy and the young man rejoice in

his strength and the old man in the calm delights of maturity. And let us all live life as we go along and believe in life and love life.

And we may be rather assured that the very best guarantee of a continued existence after death is worthily to live that span which is allotted to us before death.

I think a great error has been made in using the word "Salvation" to mean the saving of men's souls from hell or pain after death. It may mean this, in part. Or it may not.

But the whole idea is non-Christian. It smacks of the heathen concepts of Mohammedanism, Buddhism, of the next-world fancies of the Greek and Egyptian mysteries.

The thing Jesus wanted to "save" us from was Misery. He did this by giving us Wisdom by which to understand what makes Misery. And by showing us the power of Love, which is the Joy force among men.

In other words, we could have a more correct idea of Jesus' intent if we thought of Him as coming to bring us Joy, than to bring us Safety.

"These things have I spoken to you," He said, "that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

He called the Holy Spirit "The Comforter."

And about all the real, transforming force that Christians have ever exerted in the world has been their Joy force. As they have been more contented, more cheerful, more courageous under adversity, and had more poise and beauty of life, they have made their way, converted the world and altered the nature of men.

All their Pomp and Circumstance, their money endowments, their State aid, their Crusaders and Soldiers of the Cross, their hocus-pocus of mysticism and hypnotic obsession, their thundering orators, their clever logicians, have been what a scaffolding is to a building, what deciduous leafage is to a tree, what noise, clatter, shavings, waste and cinders are to a mighty factory.

The great, majestic, silent Force, has been the Wisdom and Love of Jesus, changing the Ideals of Humanity and pouring the tides of power into Humanity's heart.

The Delusion of the Superiority of Idleness

"All earth's nobilities are grounded in idleness. Christ taught the nobility of service."

The Delusion of the Superiority of Idleness

IN some strange way it seems to be ingrained in the consciousness of the world, that those who work are inferior to those who do not have to work. All of the earth's nobilities were grounded in idleness. Its kings and aristocrats were all loafers. Throughout Europe today it is still considered to be more or less soiling to be engaged in "trade." A man's nobility is measured by the distance he must go back in his ancestry before he finds an ancestor who earned his salt.

The fundamental insanity, believed by the majority of the world today to be the truth, is that the work of the world is to be done by defectives who are not clever enough to escape from work. Also that those who have nothing particular to do and who live upon money laid up by others, are to be looked up to as being of a superior order. These are the bluebloods. Theirs is the ruling class. This is the rotten foundation upon which European civilization largely rests. I state it here, not to refute it, for that were an idle and superfluous task, but merely to pillory it. So that passing by you may see its ugly face.

Most people everywhere consider work to be an

affliction. It is something to be done, something to be got through with in order that afterwards we may enjoy ourselves in play. It is supposed to be a curse.

Jesus said: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." While I have no fancy for bandying texts of Scripture, this statement of Jesus is surely a sufficient negative to the idea that work was a curse laid upon Adam and Eve when they were driven from the Garden.

Our wrong conception of work arises from a wrong conception of human life and why it exists at all, and wherein its satisfaction lies.

As a matter of fact, every living organism, including Man, is destined by nature to carry out its career in terms of joy. The normal functioning of every instinct and every appetite is pleasing. The world is tuned to joy. And joy is found by any living thing only in the forthputting of its faculties. If a hound is made to run, he cannot be happy unless he runs. If a monkey is made to live among the trees, he is happiest when he is leaping from bough to bough, or hanging by his tail from some high branch. In other words every living thing, if it is to be happy, must do that which it is equipped to do.

Man is placed upon this earth to improve it, to bring order out of confusion, to get his food, his clothing and his shelter from its bounty, and so to command and tame the forces of nature to his will, that they may leave him margin enough for the exercise of his mind.

Those who are doing this are happy people. As a rule it is the workers of the world who are contented and cheerful, and it is the loafers who are the trouble makers. It is the workers of the world who are moral. Not only the early Christian Church but almost every sect and branch of Protestantism, originated with the working classes. So far as history reveals, the magnificent ones of earth have never had a collective moral impulse. Happiness is a by-product of work. A normal condition of Man implies that he should labor for his daily bread. Therefore Jesus warned us against accumulating riches, and smothering our souls with possessions. This is not because poverty is desirable, but because idleness is suicidal.

When Jesus said that the rich man would find it harder to get into Heaven than it would be for a camel to squeeze through the eye of a needle, it was not because riches are wicked, but because a man is a fool if he thinks the mere possession of

them and the idleness they bring can insure his happiness. In piling up the things of life he has lost the art of living.

For life is to be lived day by day. And unless we have learned how to be happy in our work, and unless happiness springs directly from our work, we but stumble forward in vain delusion.

It was for this reason that Jesus addressed Himself to the mass, to the people who had to labor for their daily bread. He never bothered with the superior class. For the purpose of His teaching was to show men how to adjust themselves to the necessities of existence, how to live lives of poise and beauty in the daily task. He had no æsthetic theory, or mystical cult with which idle loafers were to amuse themselves.

It is strange, the contempt of the world for work. I have even seen pictures of Hell wherein the abode of the damned was represented as filled with smoking factory chimneys, and the wheels of machinery. and I do not recall ever having seen a picture of Heaven in which any of the saints and angels were engaged in doing anything but loafing. And yet, to my mind, any continued existence would be repulsive unless the soul were to be engaged upon some worthy occupation, some service to the com-

munity, some wholesome labor that would give play to the normal faculties.

My own notion of Heaven is that of Samuel Johnson. One evening when he and Boswell were strolling in the garden and viewing the starry skies, Boswell asked him what was his notion of the future life. He replied that to his mind the most reasonable idea was that the same laws that govern us here would continue to govern us there. So it seems to me that if my existence is to be continued beyond this earth, no Heaven would be welcome unless there was in it some fit task, unless I could be occupied in subduing the forces of nature, studying the laws, and solving the problems incident to an intelligent life.

In other words, I do not think I should want to go to Heaven unless I could find a job.

Robert Louis Stevenson once wrote something to this effect: that truly as he loved his wife, and lonely as he would be without her, if death should take her from him, yet he could conceive of going on. But he could not conceive of any continued existence without his work.

The gist of this work idea is that men are to be happy while they live, and as they live, and that

the best insurance for the future (which, whether it be Tomorrow or After Death, is always hidden), is to live happily, courageously and intelligently Today.

The Delusion of Exclusiveness

"The pleasures of life do not run horizontally through any stratum of society,—they run vertically through all strata."

JANE ADDAMS.

The Delusion of Exclusiveness

ANOTHER delusion that has always contaminated the mind of Man is that exclusiveness is desirable.

The shops advertise in emphatic letters that they are offering the most exclusive designs in shoes, and skirts, in bedsteads, and wrist-watches. This appeals to the common notion that anything is to be prized in proportion to the fewness of those who possess it. While a diamond is a beautiful stone, the most joy of owning diamonds comes from the fact that not very many people can afford them. The rich man builds his house not simply for the purpose of comfort and beauty, but also for the purpose of demonstrating that he has a kind of house that poor people cannot have. At the theater they fence in the very worst seats in the house and charge twice the price for them, and people willingly pay more to sit in a box where they can only see one side of the stage, than to sit in the orchestra where they can see it all.

This idea runs through all classes of people, all departments of life.

There is the literary snob, who reads only the highest browed books and magazines, and gets a certain sweetness out of their consumption simply

because he knows that most people have no taste for them.

There is the religious snob who is over-proud of the fact that only an enlightened few are familiar with the catch phrases of his sect.

It is considered by almost everybody a mark of superiority to get away from people.

Jane Addams once said that the pleasures of life do not run horizontally through any stratum of society, but they run vertically through all strata. That is to say, the joys of existence are, after all, quite simple, and common to all classes, and these joys are not only eating and drinking and working and playing and loving, but they are also the joys of thinking and the exercise of the human spirit.

One of the most striking characteristics of Jesus' appeal was this universality. It was to "all men everywhere."

There have been many schemes, many theories and organizations especially designed for Britons, or Frenchmen, or college graduates, or one class or another, but the thing that marks the gospel of Jesus is that it is for every human being that is born of woman.

The universality of Jesus' appeal is shattering. It is non-ethnic, non-national, non-organizable, non-

exclusive. Within it every people, and tongue, and tribe, find ample room. It is co-terminous with humanity. It is the only set of ideas and impulses that has yet been discovered, upon the basis of which humanity can get together.

The Delusion That Paganism Is Freedom

"Paganism passed simply because humanity became bored with it."

The Delusion That Paganism Is Freedom

IT is quite a custom among minds that have never developed spiritual consciousness to consider paganism as freedom.

Having grown up among Christian institutions, that which has impressed them most have been the restrictions devised by the various churches.

The restrictions were intended to be disciplinary. They work well enough when there is something to discipline. But where there is no spiritual life, they produce only irritation and rebellion.

Every faith which has got itself into an organization creates a by-product of infidelity.

The infidel, outside of the Church, is the natural reaction against intolerance inside of the Church.

That considerable mass of people who have been repelled from spiritual life by the hardness of organization, are also human; and being human, they have spiritual appetite, which is a common human instinct.

To gratify this appetite, some of them turn to the variegated field of religious fads and novelties.

Others, and particularly those who are responsive to the deep humanities of the pre-Christian classics, those who have enjoyed the stimulus of culture,

often turn with thirsty eyes to the fountains of paganism.

This sentiment is exquisitely expressed by Wordsworth:

"Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

But the trouble is that this is only a pathetic longing; the object toward which it is directed has no more sustenance than a painted apple, nor more perfume than an embroidered flower.

As a matter of fact, paganism was a great fear; as the Roman said, "Timor fecit deos," fear makes the gods.

Instead of being afraid of one god, the ancients were afraid of a thousand.

The triumph of modern faith is that it conceives of the Deity as a friend, and all the terrors with which He is still clothed are but the clinging garments of that paganism which modern faith has been unable to discard.

To paganism the Deity was a dread autocrat; rather, their gods were a swarm of divine policemen and detectives.

To the pagan, there was a god lurking behind every tree, concealed in every bush, thundering in every storm. Gods were everywhere. When he walked the woods, he feared he might step on one. When he bathed in the waters, one might be lurking there to seize him.

The human mind cannot continue to exist in an environment of fear; by and by he will defy it or ridicule it.

Nothing is so monotonous as fear.

Paganism passed simply because humanity was bored with it.

We can no more turn again to paganism than a grown man can go back to the tale of Little Red Riding Hood.

The Delusion of Class: Jesus Was the First Great Democrat

"God must have loved the Common People, he made so many of them."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

The Delusion of Class

Jesus Was the First Great Democrat

IT seems to me that Jesus was the real founder of Democracy.

For Democracy simply means faith in the people, faith in the whole mass of humanity, as distinguished from any other theory which might imply that the whole mass is practically hopeless and that only an exclusive group is capable of culture, of government, and of civilization.

The distinguishing feature of Jesus was that He appealed to the Commons. He did not address Himself to the learned, to the higher orders of society or to the ruling class.

He not only appealed to the multitude, but "the common people heard Him gladly." It has always been the common run of people who have best understood His message, and the chief perversions of the gospel have come from one or another of the exclusive or superior groups. In proportion as the Church has grown in power and riches and pride, it has drifted away to heathenism. The "salt of the earth" that has kept it from spoiling is the Common Man.

It is the plain man of the street to whom Jesus addressed Himself. It is to the common mind of

the world that He gave His message. He was called a "friend of Publicans and Sinners." And it is His gospel that has always been the force that has upset tyrannies, overthrown privilege, and enabled the common man to get a chance.

For Democracy, of course, does not mean so silly a thing as equality. Men were not created equal but with varying gifts and capacities. All Democracy implies is an equality of opportunity. It means that in the race for life every soul should start at the scratch.

There are superior people under Democracy, but when a pure Democracy shall come, superiority will depend upon real ability and not upon the hazard of birth or privilege or any such thing.

Jesus believed in the people. And it seems to me that it is not fantastic to say that a belief in the people, in their goodness, and in their wisdom, is quite as essential to being a Christian, as the belief in the wisdom and goodness of God.

For if God is anywhere He is in the people He has made. We shall not be far from the truth if we have the people in mind instead of the Supreme Being when we repeat the text: "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." For almost all of the trouble of the

world has been that we have not believed in the people. That is why we are so damned.

It is curious to see how the meaning of Jesus has been twisted squarely around and it has been considered an evidence of sanctity to think of the world as utterly wicked and lost. How can we believe any such thing when we are told that "God so loved the world?"

It is absurd to think that this statement means that God only loves a few members of the First Presbyterian Church. It must mean that He loves humanity; the negroes of Central Africa, the coolies of China, the Arabs of the desert, "all men everywhere."

We have wars, we have industrial quarrels, we have family difficulties, all because we do not believe in each other. It is not so much that we do not have faith in God, the difficulty is we do not have faith in Man. Then, if the superiority of your wisdom and piety leads you to despise the common run of men, you may well be assured that you are not right but rotten.

After two thousand years the world still finds it absurd to believe in Mankind. Behind the gospel of Christ is the startling and revolutionary idea that the people, the great gray mass of common

men and women, have really more goodness than any exclusive set that has withdrawn from it, far more wisdom than those who would teach them, and far more common sense than their leaders.

The very idea of a Church, an ecclesia, a group of people drawn out from, and separated from, the general mass, being the representative of Jesus, is intrinsically absurd. There is only one group that can understand Jesus Christ, and that group is the whole world. When God takes up the whole mass of humanity He can see His face in it, but in any select group that reflection is distorted.

Jesus' message was to believe in men, to trust them, to love them and to help them. We still, for the most part, think this is entirely impractical. It is denounced as silly and effeminate to turn the other cheek and not to stand up for your rights, and all that. It never occurs to us to inquire how poorly we have gotten along with the other program. We have been fighting and hating and punishing and biting and scratching for a good many thousand years, and what has it gotten us? We have built up a huge economic system of inequality, we have constructed a society and civilization that seethes with unrest, and is only tolerable in so far as it has been modified by the teachings of Jesus.

It is a smart thing to say that Christianity is a failure, but, as Mr. Chesterton observed, no one should ever say that, for Christianity has never been tried. If all the world, or any considerable portion of it would simply put into practice the teachings and principles of Jesus Christ, then they might be prepared to pass some judgment upon it. But as long as we confine our Christianity to the singing of hymns, and the making of prayers, and all the while regulate our practices on the principles of heathenism, we are in no position to pass judgment.

Jesus is the Saviour of the World because He is the founder of Democracy. For it is only Democracy, only a profound belief and confidence in the people, that shall save the World.

I Am a Christian Because in Christianity I Find the Best Grounds for the Hope of Immortality

"Jesus did not attempt to prove immortality, He took it for granted."

I Am a Christian Because in Christianity I Find the Best Grounds for the Hope of Immortality

THE strongest proof that there is a life beyond the grave is, to my mind, to be found in the instincts. There is in the human being an ineradicable repugnance toward the idea that a man dies as a dog dies. There is an incurable belief to be found in every race and country that the dead live on. While we have no knowledge of another life the persistent conviction of it remains. The people of this day go down to the grave as the people of every other age have gone,

> "Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
> Still clutching the inviolable shade."

Whoever made man, it is unthinkable to me that He should have put in him such a rooted conviction only to cast him at last into the ditch.

I do not know that there is a future life, for it is not knowable, but I believe it. That is to say, I think and act "as if" this were true. And I find that, when I do so think and act, the results upon my life and conduct are in every way desirable. And I find that those persons who think and act "as if" this life were all, number among themselves

the majority of those who are profligates, perverted and altogether the kind of persons I do not want to be. In other words, I find that faith in immortality works, that it produces constantly good and wholesome effects, and that the disbelief in immortality produces as a rule a degraded and lower order of life.

I am a Christian because when one adopts the principles of Jesus they produce in him the kind of life that would naturally be eternal. In other words, when Jesus speaks of eternal life it seems to me that the emphasis is rather upon the Quality than on the Duration.

Those elements of character which are developed by the principles of Jesus are too long for this earthly career. If this life were all, it is hard to see why it is worth while for a soldier to die for his country, for a mother to sacrifice herself for her child, for one to accept disgrace or disaster rather than stain his honor, or for one to remain loyal when his loyalty may mean loss or pain. It is difficult to see the reasonableness of goodness, of nobility and of greatness of soul unless one's personality continues after death. The logic of the hog-man who refuses to act as if there were another

life, is unanswerable, "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die!"

Somehow the belief in immortality underlies and nourishes all the finer elements of the soul. Somehow the denial of a future life sows with salt every flowering field of enthusiasm.

Christ never attempted to prove immortality. He took it for granted. He taught, He lived and He acted as if He were going to live forever. When I allow myself to be dominated by His influence I do likewise. And when I do this my life becomes vastly more worth living.

No single thought so dignifies and elevates humanity as the thought of immortality. Nothing more deters men from acting like beasts. Nothing more feeds the roots of Culture. Nothing more beautifies our family relations. It is the immediate jewel of mankind's soul. And this conviction of immortality is one which is fed and nurtured by every Christian Church, each in its own way, but all in some way.

I am a part of Nature. Nature produced me and mixed her own strange fires in my clay. I rest my soul more upon Nature and her verities than I do upon the fallible conclusions of my reasoning powers. And to me Nature is but another

name for God. And God for me finds most satisfying expression in the face of Jesus Christ. Jesus, I think, is as near as I am ever going to be able to get to God. It is written that no man hath seen God at any time, and very probably no man ever will see Him at any time, just as no man can see the human spirit but only the body through which it acts. Therefore my hope of heaven is inextricably tangled up with Jesus.

When I shall go out of this life, if I shall then come face to face with my Judge, I shall have the satisfaction of having confided my life to the leadership of the best Representative of God I ever knew. When my transition shall come into the Great Unknown, the thought of no one shall be dearer, closer or more comforting to me than the thought of Him who uttered those strange, masterful and electric words:

"I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth on Me shall never die."

Christianity Supplies the Most Intelligent Context of Eternity

"All the moral enthusiasms of the race are drawn from our context in Eternity."

Christianity Supplies the Most Intelligent Context of Eternity

THE main reason why any man's life seems trivial, and why existence is bitter in any man's mouth, is that he has ceased to think of his earthly career in connection with its context in eternity.

Nothing is more tragic than to conceive of one's self as merely a kind of animal, yet endowed with adventurous intellect and the functions of a soul.

The very terms of the proposition imply despair.

To think that a creature, gifted with the infinite capacity for going on, shall be cut down like a beast of the field and forever cease, is necessarily to imply that the God who made him is a cruel jester.

We cannot wonder at the amount of cynicism in the world; we can only wonder that there is not more when we reflect upon the great number of people to whom in their creed death ends all.

The more brilliant the mind, the more loyal the heart, and the more sensitive the nature, the more revolting it is to suppose that at last so excellent a creature shall be dumped into the pit of death.

All the moral enthusiasms of the race are drawn from our context in Eternity.

Every noble impulse is too long for this life.

It is the Context of Eternity that makes us gentle under provocation, honest under temptation, faithful and true under all trials.

Further than that, and more important than that, the kind of joy that is worth while, all that contentment of the spirit which cannot be destroyed, all those satisfactions which glow like undimming stars in our life and do not flare up and go out like a taper, are those which have their Context in Eternity.

The pleasure of the table, the sating of fleshly desires, the achievement of fame, the possessing of great fortune—all those things have a certain quality of joy. But behind them stalks a common horror—They Pass!

A man can never be thoroughly self-respecting, he cannot even be interesting if he considers that this earthly chapter is all there is to his story.

We can no more separate this life from Eternity than we can separate a year from its century, or an hour from its day.

All sorts of reasons have been given for the evil that men do, for their wantonness, their violence, their pettiness, their vileness; but the real reason, the fountain and source from which all baseness

flows, the open sewer that pollutes the human race, is the delusion under which rests so great a part of the world that this human play is over when the curtain of death rings down and beyond that there is nothing.

The gist of evolution lies not so much in the long way in the past by which we have arrived at where we are, but in the long way that leads toward the future.

No man can think of this planet except in its relation to the sun and stars that fill the spaces of infinity.

And there can be no intelligent theory of human life which considers it apart from its Context in Eternity.

WHAT I MEAN WHEN I SAY I AM A CHRISTIAN

G. Stanley Hall's Confession

G. Stanley Hall is a distinguished psychologist. I have read these words of his with most sympathetic appreciation, and commend them to my readers.

"As I review and examine my life for the answer, the result is very far from being satisfactory. I have been selfish where I should have been generous, small-minded where I ought to have been magnanimous, have followed outer where I should have followed inner sanctions, have pretended to virtues which I lacked. Yet, on the other hand, I have loved and pursued truth and hated lies; I have given, made sacrifice, for good causes; fought what I deemed errors and sins, sometimes to my cost; and on the whole honestly believe that I have been more concerned for the welfare of others than for my own, as a teacher should be; and I have tried to look within as a psychologist ought to do. Thus on the whole I count myself a disciple of the great Master of souls, and claim Christian fellowship with all those everywhere who live to love and serve. All who do this belong to the living Church of Christ, and we are brethren in Him. My very heart and soul go out to this great regenerator who showed individuals, communities, races and nations the one and only way by which they could be saved."

G. Stanley Hall, in *Jesus, the Christ, in the Light of Psychology.*

What I Mean by Religion

"Jesus came to show men how to live, not to set up a new religion."

What I Mean by Religion

I AM at such pains to define the terms I use because most misunderstanding is caused by a lack of definition. And the reader must remember that when I define a term I do not claim to be stating absolutely what it means, but simply what it means to me, what it means in the way that I am using it.

When I speak of the Religion of Jesus I speak with doubtful accuracy. I am not sure that He was a religious teacher. The word religion is used but once in the New Testament. Christ as far as we know never used it at all. It seems to me that He was rather an expert in Life. He had the greatest vision, the most unerring perception of the great cosmic laws that govern life. I doubt that He intended to set up a new religion, just as I doubt that He had any idea of establishing a Church. He certainly said very little, if anything, about either of them. It seems to me that He came to show men How to Live, and He came nearer doing it than any man I know.

But using the word Religion in referring to the religion of Jesus I cannot better define it than as I did in a book I once wrote entitled, "The Religion of Tomorrow." Religion is the Personal Influence of God.

I can find nothing in Religion, that is, nothing exemplified in Jesus' teachings and nothing that I can get hold of for my own life, except Personal Influence. The influence which Jesus Christ has over me is precisely the same kind of thing that any other good and lofty personage has over me. When I associate with a fine man or come under the influence of a noble woman there is a subtle change takes place in my character. That, as near as I can express it, is precisely the sort of thing that is produced by my contact with Jesus.

And this Personal Influence is not limited to the living people I meet. Immanuel Kant influences me, and David, the king of Israel, and Abraham Lincoln and Alfred Tennyson, but I never saw any of them. Their personal influence is safely carried to me through what they have written and what I have heard about them. For that matter people who never lived at all influence me. I have been markedly affected by Jean Valjean and John Halifax and Mark Sabre and Romola.

It is this sort of influence that Jesus has upon me, and His differs from that of the others only as it is stronger, more permanent and in every way more effective. I do not say that Jesus Christ was not God and that He was merely a man; all I say

is that He is more of a man than anyone I ever heard of. And just what the difference is between the greatest man and a god I am not sure that I understand or that it makes any matter.

Here is the greatest teacher that ever lived. He has influenced more lives than any other man our civilization has ever produced. He has inspired noble thoughts and deeds in thousands of those who only beheld Him through a maze of heathenism. Even seen afar off as a mere dead figure on a crucifix, even taken to be merely a cog in a theological syllogism, even when His worship has degenerated into little better than a mowing heathenism, there is still something so strangely vital and dynamic about Him that His personal influence does not fail to bring forth some sort of fruit. I am not disposed to discuss whether He be God or man; my only point is that, whatever He be, He has had more and better influence upon my life and has been a better guide to my thinking than any other.

Christianity to Me Is a Way to Live, Not a Way to Escape from Life

"It is not so much that Christianity is a religion as that it supplies the power and intelligence to use the religious motive."

Christianity to Me Is a Way to Live, Not a Way to Escape from Life

I SHOULD say that it is not altogether correct to say that Christianity is a religion. I do not think it is the same sort of thing that Buddhism is, or Mohammedanism, or Voodooism, or one of the many forms of religion that have from time to time pervaded certain portions of the people. Christianity is not a competitor of other religions.

And yet Christianity embraces all the religion I believe in. I think it would be more accurate to say that Christianity includes religion, than to say that it is religion.

Christianity, to my mind, comes nearer being the sort of thing that the Taoism of Lao-Tze was, that is, it is a "way." That was the term used by the apostles. They spoke of all who were "of this way." In other words, it is a way of living. We might say that Christianity is a wisdom, or a point of view, or a vision. The trouble is that we must put more feeling into it than these words imply. For Jesus addresses Himself quite as shrewdly to the emotions as to the intelligence, and properly so. For life is a mixture of thought and feeling and cannot be contained in either one of these terms to the exclusion of the other.

And there is a great deal connoted in the word "religion," which I have eliminated from Christianity as I understand it.

The vague fear of the unknown, the timid subservience to authority, the deliberate rejection of reason, the strict observance of certain rules, the hope of reward, and the fear of punishment, all these seem to me to be more or less hold-overs from the mind of primitive man, and the critical intelligence cannot be guided by them.

This does not at all mean that religion is a mere matter of mind. The intelligence makes use of the instincts, the emotions, and all of those forces which are our inheritance from the past.

In the well-ordered personality therefore, there should be a careful conservation of the emotional stuff that has been handed down to us from our ancestors, and at the same time a careful adjustment of this stuff to our intelligence.

Christianity is the power to use religion. It is the way to make religion a source of individual strength, of social order, and of economic advantage. In one sense everybody has religion. It may take the form of the crudest superstition, or a most unintelligent belief in what is entirely nonsensical, but if it governs them, moulds their life and thought,

and influences their character, I suppose it has a right to be called a religion. Even the infidel, the cynic, the pessimist, and the sensualist have a religion of a sort. For religion can be bad as well as good. Faith can damn as well as save. If you believe in a lie it will ruin you as surely as belief in the truth will save you. For instance, if you thoroughly believe it is the truth of God that prussic acid will not injure you, and you thereupon take a good dose of it, you will wink out just as surely as if you were full of doubts on the subject.

The whole world is religious fundamentally. Christianity is the "way" to use this religion to make it wholesome and helpful.

The following account of Lao-tze, as given by Havelock Ellis, is instructive:

"The earliest of the great mystics in historical times is Lao-tze. He lived six hundred years earlier than Jesus, a hundred years earlier than Sakya-Muni, and he was more quintessentially a mystic than either. He was, moreover, incomparably nearer than either to the point of view of science. Even his occupation in life was, in relation to his age and land, of a scientific character; he was, if we may trust uncertain tradition, keeper of the archives. In the substance of his work this har-

mony of religion and science is throughout traceable, the very word "Tao," which to Lao-tze is the symbol of all that to which religion may mystically unite us, is susceptible of being translated "Reason," although that word remains inadequate to its full meaning. There are no theological or metaphysical speculations here concerning God (the very word only occurs once and may be a later interpolation), the soul, or immortality. The delicate and profound art of Lao-tze largely lies in the skill with which he expresses spiritual verities in the form of natural truths. His affirmations not only go to the core of religion, but they express the essential methods of science. This man has the mystic's heart, but he has also the physicist's touch and the biologist's eye. He moves in a sphere in which religion and science are one."—Havelock Ellis, "The Dance of Life," page 204.

The Real Authority I Find in Jesus

"All authority must be out of a man's soul."

BACON.

The Real Authority I Find in Jesus

THE object of our search is to discover wherein Christ was the "power of God." In plain English, we are seeking to find what there is about Jesus that has made Him such a force in the world.

In the way of personal testimony therefore, in the Court of Public Opinion, I wish to depose that to me Christ is the power of God simply because He is the wisdom of God. What I mean to say is, that His power abides not in His position as Lord of All, King of Kings, nor Ruler of Heaven and Earth, nor any such thing. To my mind such terms are mostly theatric. If there were nothing in the character of Jesus to dominate the world, His position would do Him no more good than the positions of the Kaiser and the Czar. If He rules the world, it is because of His real and intrinsic greatness, and not because He is surrounded by all of the *papier maché* tinsel and dignity created by a half heathen Church to lend Him awe.

A real king needs no crown, no scepter, no throne. A real God needs no bluster and thunder. And it is because to me Jesus has real authority abiding in Him that I am not at all impressed with the artificial authority thrown over Him.

In the force which Jesus exerts upon the world

there is today mingled a good deal of dross, which is of doubtful value. I think if we could get Jesus away from the false glamor of authority, out of the sacred pictures, separated from the crucifix,—in fact, if we could get Jesus out of doors, out of the temple, into the open field, into the streets, and into the living rooms of our homes, where His influence would be unconnected with any artificial masks and costumes, if we could look upon Him as a real person, feel His influence as a real soul like unto ours, and listen to His words as nothing more or less than the pure simple truth, the force that lies in His personality would have a better chance to operate in the world.

Those who cannot understand and feel the Real Authority in Jesus, the compelling, transforming, developing power of His personality and of the Vision He had and the Truth He uttered, are they who are so insistent of investing Him with Artificial Authority.

Upon one occasion He said: "Who made me a Judge or Divider over you?" That is a text worth thinking over.

What I Mean by Conversion

"Nothing can give life except the touch of another life."

What I Mean by Conversion

THIS may be a good place to speak of Conversion and define what I mean by it. I was brought up by Church members and when I was a boy I was converted rather regularly every winter at which time there was usually held a revival, or "Protracted meeting." With equal regularity I usually backslid during the summer along watermelon time. In the conventicles I regularly attended when a boy it was commonly understood that one's religious life began with his "experience," or the nervous crisis which he passed at one of these meetings. The greater part of the evangelical clergy still place the experience of conversion as the rock upon which all religious life rests, for does it not say in the Scriptures that except a man be converted he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven?

I am quite as convinced now as I was then that conversion is the beginning of the Christian life, but I have come to an understanding of the word conversion that seems to me more rational and less artificial. Conversion simply means change, perhaps a better word might be transformation. It means an alteration in the quality and trend of life.

But conversion is not some strange and mystic

spiritual phenomenon. As religion is nothing but personal influence so conversion is nothing but the effect of that personal influence. When I come in contact with a good and strong superior mind I am attracted to it and become like it. Every one who has fallen in love with a good woman knows the peculiar sublimating effect upon his character. It is so when one receives the image of Christ into his mind, bends his will to follow Him and decides to adopt His teachings and mold his life by His principles, the personal influence of Jesus flows in upon him, and that influence is so strong and unusual that the result may well be compared to being "born again."

Often when we recover from sickness we declare that we feel like "a new man." And when one comes out from under the uncertainty and depression of a Godless life and the principles of Jesus begin to operate upon him it is no extravagance to say that he is "a new man in Christ Jesus."

As a matter of fact all that can energize life is the touch of another life. Beneath all the extravagances and often grotesque confessions that have gathered about this matter of conversion there is a very considerable modicum of truth. Inside the coarse covering of the seed there is a vital germ.

What I Mean by Following Jesus: Literalism versus Common Sense

"A rule is given to us because we lack intelligence; a principle because we have it."

What I Mean by Following Jesus: Literalism Versus Common Sense

WHAT I have said about the difference between precepts and principles may need a little further explanation. I do not consider the Bible a book of Rules to keep me safe, but as a book of Principles to encourage my development.

One difference is that a Rule is a substitute for intelligence whereas a Principle is of no value unless it is mixed with intelligence.

The greater the teacher, and the more he deals with the vital themes of life, the greater demands he makes upon one's intelligence. As I understand it, the last thing that Christ, or any other great teacher, demands, is blind obedience. Indeed we cannot obey Him satisfactorily at all unless we use all the mind we have.

We read that the letter kills and that the spirit makes alive. The surest way to miss the true following of Jesus is to take everything He said literally. Jesus was an Oriental. He taught in the Oriental way, that is poetically, suggestively and by symbols. Archbishop Whately pointed out that very many of the demands of Christ were on their face purposely absurd or impossible. That was the favorite Oriental method. The object of teach-

ing in this way was to throw the disciple back upon his own intelligence. Literal obedience being impractical he must seek for the deeper and more spiritual obedience.

For instance, when He washed the disciples' feet He said that so they were to wash the feet of others. It would be manifestly trivial and unreasonable to suppose that we should constantly be taking off one another's shoes and washing feet. Any person of ordinary perception realizes that this was simply a picturesque and striking way to impress upon us the value of service.

So when He was asked how one should treat his neighbor He told the story of the Good Samaritan, adding "Go thou and do likewise." The commonest understanding must realize that this command is not to be obeyed merely by rescuing wounded travellers but rather that in the spirit of it we should give help to all who are in need.

The general principle of non-resistance which Christ taught has been most ridiculously misunderstood. He said if one is smitten upon one cheek he is to turn the other also, that if a man takes away one's coat he should give him his cloak likewise, and that if another should compel one to go with him a mile he should go with him twain. These com-

mands have been misconstrued by a blind literalism into all sorts of piddling pacifism. It has been held that the teaching of Christ in this instance would make a man a mollycoddle. But we have only to look at the Principle which underlies these sayings and we will find that it is both sane and practical. There is not a man in business that does not turn the other cheek forty times a day. If he stopped to strike back at everyone that strikes at him he would never reach his office. If one turned aside to chase and wreak vengeance upon every little puppy dog that snaps at his heels he would never come to the end of his journey. The Principle underlying these sayings of Jesus is the very essence of true dignity and nobility of character. It means that the man of superior mind has not time to harbor grudges and is too well bred to take notice of slights. He does not strike back, not because he is afraid, but simply because it is not worth while. Christ was not appealing to the pusillanimous mind but to the lofty mind.

This principle of non-resistance as taught by Christ is really a sort of spiritual jiu jutsu. Just as the experienced Japanese wrestler takes advantage of the violence of his opponent's attack to break his arm or his neck by giving way when

resistance was expected, so the most of our spiritual conquests have been made by yielding. It is precisely the same principle upon which a cultured gentleman shows his superiority over a lout by courtesy and modesty.

When I say therefore that I follow Jesus I mean that I seek to work out His Principles in my own conduct, and I find that in the long run by so doing I gain the greatest amount of personal contentment and of self-respect, and that I get along best with my neighbors and am more efficient generally.

I do not think there is any way for a self-respecting mind to escape responsibility. Responsibility is the best teacher in the world. I do not think that Jesus would want me to try to evade it. I do not think that there is any excuse, if I find myself in a bad situation to say to Jesus, "You told me to do it." He does not tell me to do anything; rather He supplies me with those Principles and imparts to me that Spirit which enables me to find out for myself what to do. He stimulates and hardens my judgment; He does not deaden it.

One example of the great hardship that blind literalism has worked may be found in the relation of the teaching of the Church as regards sex in-

stinct. On one occasion Jesus said that "whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery in his heart."

Construing this to be a declaration that the feeling of natural desire which is inevitable in every normal man and woman is wicked, many earnest souls have struggled tragically against human nature. Vast systems of celibacy have been organized, the supposition being that those who succeed in denaturing themselves are in some way holier than normal healthy people. Tolstoy, whose mind was heavily sooted with medievalism, developed this theme absurdly and extravagantly. It has been stated that "all concupiscence hath somewhat of evil in it." By concupiscence, of course, is meant the perfectly natural longing which people of the opposite sex have for each other.

All this is illustrative of the perverted and septic effects of literalism. Common sense tells us that the Principle which Jesus wished to enforce is that the love of man and woman should be idealized. And in truth Idealism is the only salvation of the sex instinct. To endeavor to eradicate it is to drive it into all sorts of noxious perversions.

Perhaps no single error has done more harm and caused more tragedy in the world than the abomin-

able notion that the sex instinct is somehow wicked or unclean. Ages of twisted misteaching have gotten us into the notion that "lust," which is nothing more nor less than the moving of a natural desire, is shameful and vile. A distinguished psychiatrist said to me that the very first thing in treating those afflicted with sex perversion was to get out of their minds the idea that the sex feeling is inherently wicked, and to get into their minds that it is necessary, beautiful and to be carefully and intelligently conserved.

Ordinary intelligence should lead us to realize that the sex feeling is the basis of the most beautiful developments of life. Without it there would be no Family, with all the wholesome charm of family relations; there would be no Romantic Affection, with all the wealth of poetry and idealization that comes therefrom. The whole world of living organisms is saturated with sex, and there can be no sane interpretation of life that does not accept this and give it its proper place. I will not say that any doctrine that teaches that the sex instinct is somehow unclean is an erroneous doctrine; such mildness would be criminal, it is an abominable doctrine.

It goes without saying of course that this force of desire, like all other forces within us must be

understood and must be properly controlled by conscience and reason. Being the strongest and most persistent of forces it naturally when it is perverted produces the most outrageous crimes and excesses. But from this fact to conclude that we should extirpate it would be tantamount to saying that because some people get sun stroke the sun should be extinguished.

When we take this saying of Jesus in connection with His other saying, that a man should forsake all other women and cleave to one, we get a sane idea of what He meant, and the true basis of monogamy, to wit: that monogamy is the natural and only means for the normal expression of the sex instinct which at the same time preserves the ideals.

What I Mean When I Call Jesus Christ My Savior

"I call Christ my Savior because his is the most considerable force that lifts me out of the dominance of low motives into the realm of higher motives."

What I Mean When I Call Jesus Christ My Savior

I AM perfectly willing and consent with a full conscience to call Jesus Christ my personal Savior. But I wish to define this term.

What I mean is that by His influence I am saved to a higher order of living; His is the most considerable force that lifts me out of a dominance of low and unworthy motives into the realm of higher, more human and better motives.

I do not use the term Savior to mean that He rescues me from the wrath of God, for the simple reason that I do not believe God has any wrath. I do not think that God is angry when I do wrong and wants to hurt me, but that He is sorry for me and pities me as I would pity a child of mine who was doing evil. It seems to me Maeterlinck put a very revealing sentence into the mouth of old Arkel in "Pelleas and Melisande," when he made him say, "Si j'étais Dieu j'aurais pitié des hommes." (If I were God I should feel sorry for men.) It appears to me that Saint Paul was rather carried away with the excellence of his own logic in expounding his theory of the Atonement in which it was found necessary for the Son to be killed in

order to turn aside the anger of the Father. I love and respect God too much to give my consent to such logic.

And I do not speak of Christ as my Savior because He is going to take me out of this wicked world when I die and put me in a beautiful and spotless place called heaven. To my mind salvation does not consist in changing one's environment but in altering one's character. Insofar as Christ changes my nature He is my Savior.

I do not consider Christ as my Savior in the sense of making me "safe." I do not think I want to be safe. I do not ask God to keep me out of danger. I pray for something infinitely more desirable, that He keep me strong and unafraid.

The instinct of life is for preservation, as Cicero said, "Self defense is the first law of nature." But there are two ways by which life may be preserved; one is by walls of defense and the other is by the strength of the life force within us. One is the antiseptic method of keeping away from that which can injure us; the other is by strengthening the forces of our health so that we shall be immune. One means of safety is the armor, the other is the sword. To me Jesus is my Savior by strengthening my powers of resistance, by giving me courage, hope,

vitality, and thus energizing my life force. Hence I do not wish to shut myself up in a monastery or keep myself out of contact with all unworthy people and otherwise preventing all contact with evil. This method may be well enough for children until their strength is developed, but it is ruinous and emasculating for adults.

Some one has said that souls may be divided into two classes, the crustaceans and the vertebrates. Crustaceans depend for safety upon the strength of their shell; they wear their hard or bony part outside. Vertebrates have their skeleton within. So crustaceans for safety crawl into their shell, while vertebrates for safety must fight. I have no desire to be a crustacean soul.

I do not think that either in this world or in the next I shall ever be removed from danger, for the simple reason that when there shall be no more danger there shall be no more life. If I am ever safe in heaven it will be because I am strong enough to stay there and not because the walls are so high that I cannot get out.

What I Mean by Prayer

"Prayer is not my effort to change the Divine Will but to adjust myself to it."

What I Mean by Prayer

I BELIEVE in Prayer. I pray in private and join heartily in public prayer. But here I should like to say as nearly as I can what I mean by praying.

Perhaps the best definition of prayer, or the one that best satisfies me, is "wishful thinking." When I pray I endeavor to express in words the very best desires I have. I address these words to the Spirit of God because when I try to realize His presence I find that it encourages the most perfect expression.

My general attitude in this matter however is that of trying to find out what is the Divine Will and to adjust myself to it. I have no desire to bend the will of the all wise Father to my own. I think I should be a fool to want to do this. His purpose must be infinitely better for me than anything I could think of.

I like the comparison made by Horace Bushnell, that when we pray we are as a man sitting in a boat and pulling on a rope tied to the shore. He tries to pull the shore nearer to him but really pulls himself nearer to the shore. So I may seem to want God to do as I ask, for my poor human faculties have no better means of expression, but beneath it

all what I really want most is to do what He desires.

For this reason I cannot say that I believe in what is commonly understood to be "special answers to prayer." I do not pray for rain nor any other change in the weather, I do not pray for money nor for health nor that the life of my beloved may be spared. In all these instances my heavenly Father knows what I need and want better than I do. What I pray for is that whatever may come I may be able to adjust myself to the great plan. Any other kind of praying to me is illogical.

There is a much quoted passage of Scripture in which Jesus said that whatever we pray for, believing, we shall receive. This to me is another one of those Oriental statements which must be strongly mixed with common sense else it becomes absurd. For we have only to conceive of a world of one billion souls, each one of them praying, let us say, for the kind of weather he wants, one for sun, another for rain, one for the east wind and another for the west, and we can easily see that we should be living in a topsy turvy world, a world of chaos, a world not under the rule of One wise Lawmaker but torn by the whims of a billion foolish lawmakers.

Prayer to me has developed rather into a constant attitude and habit of mind and has become less

and less a matter of stated occasions. I rarely get down upon my knees because somehow with my notion of God He does not wish to see me on my knees. He is no sultan nor monarch that loves to see His subjects grovel. He is a Father and a Friend and as such would rather have us walk and talk with Him. Of course I get on my knees or stand up as the case may be at Church services with the rest of the congregation, but I do this as a matter of politeness and to avoid offense, and because after all it makes no matter. If other people do not like to pray without kneeling I am perfectly willing to kneel with them, but I kneel for their sakes and not for God's sake.

I like to join in the public prayer whether I read it out of a book in the Episcopal Church or listen to the minister in the Congregational Church. I am encouraged and strengthened by the knowledge of my fellow men uniting with me in an approach to God, and however settled I may be in my own opinions perhaps after all they are not much better than those of others, and the great Father may be more pleased with their communion than with mine. For all that I am saying is no argument for egotism; it is merely a plea for independence and an effort toward honesty.

What I Mean by the Holy Spirit

"A man is a spirit whose body I can see. God is a spirit whose body I cannot see. God's spirit is the Holy Spirit."

What I Mean by the Holy Spirit

I BELIEVE in the Holy Spirit. But when I say this I have a certain and understandable concept in my mind. It is nothing woozy nor supernatural. When we speak of a man's spirit we mean his real self, for we recognize that a man is more than an animal. He is a mind or spirit that has a body. He is not a body that contains a mind or spirit. This is simply my point of view concerning human beings, and I retain it because I find it is more usable and works better than the theory that man is a mere animal that thinks.

As a man is a spirit whose body I can see, so God is a spirit whose body I cannot see. Some men have a good influence upon me and they are good spirits. God's Spirit also has an influence upon me, especially through Jesus Christ, and that is a good Spirit, so superlatively good that it may well be called the Holy Spirit.

As to the question of the Trinity, whether God be three Persons in One, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as far as I am concerned that is a refinement of western logic and scholastic speculation. I do not understand it and never heard of anybody that did understand it. And I am of the opinion, that it makes not the slightest difference as far as my life

is concerned. The notion that God would be angry with me because I do not give intellectual consent to something that I do not in the slightest degree comprehend is to me absurd.

At the same time I can heartily join with those who worship the Holy Spirit and in any praise of that Spirit that may be made. But I think I have quite as much right to define my terms as the next man.

God is a Spirit, doubtless, just as a man is a spirit. It is inaccurate to say that either God or man has a spirit, they are spirits. The prophet has expressed this with poetic beauty in the saying, "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord."

A good deal of talk which I have heard about "receiving the Holy Spirit," and the Holy Spirit "falling" upon people seems to me to be tainted with heathenism. Insofar as it is conceived as a kind of irrational magic or hypnotism I have personally been unable to use it. But every day I feel the influence of the Spirit of God just as I feel the influence of the spirit of good men and women. This is to me plain and consistent with intelligence, and entirely free from hocus pocus.

WHAT I DO NOT MEAN WHEN I SAY I AM A CHRISTIAN

One hardly knows what you mean until you explain what you do not mean.

I Do Not Refer to Any of the Formulated Creeds

"My creed is the Greatest Common Divisor of all the creeds. Any man who is honestly trying to follow Jesus I am willing to call my brother."

I Do Not Refer to Any of the Formulated Creeds

I DO not think that my opinions square entirely with the statements expressed in the Creed of this or that Church. I doubt if any Church would call me entirely Orthodox. Yet, for all that, I could probably get along very comfortably as a member of any Christian Church. I doubt if the authorities of the Church would expel me, because I would not be inclined to make trouble by protesting against those elements of their stated belief of which I do not approve. This is not because I would be dishonest or cowardly, nor because I am willing to consent to declarations which I do not believe to be true. It is rather because the objectionable elements in any Creed are almost entirely composed of matters which I am quite sure neither the creed makers nor myself know anything about. Most of them concern issues at one time highly controversial, and with few exceptions none of them touch upon the real issues of Christian living.

That is to say, I heartily endorse that which might be called the Greatest Common Divisor of all the Christian creeds. There are certain things that every Christian Church believes. There are certain other things which each Church believes yet which

differ from the belief of other churches. I believe the general belief of all of them, and to the peculiar distinctive belief of each one of them I am indifferent.

For instance, if you were to line up the representatives of all the Churches from the Pope of Rome to Mary Baker Eddy of the Christian Scientists and William Booth of the Salvation Army, and ask each one his opinion about the Trinity, the Mode of Baptism, the Apostolic Succession and the Forms of Church Government, you would get as many answers as there were respondents. But if you were to ask them all such questions as whether it were better to be honest than dishonest, to be clean than dirty, to be devout than blasphemous, to be self-controlled than wilful, to be virtuous than lewd, every one of them would give the same answer.

Perhaps this is what Emerson had in mind when he said that all good men are of one religion.

This does not mean that the difference between the Churches does not matter. It may matter a whole lot. My only point is that it does not matter to me. Do not forget that this is a confession and not an argument.

All the differences between the Churches belong

to the past. They are upon issues about which very few people at present are interested. When they fight they are fighting the quarrels of their great grandfathers, and most of them have forgotten what it was all about in the first place. All that survives and is of present and vital interest to any Church is just that part of it which corresponds to the Greatest Common Divisor. The rest is about as valuable as the vermiform appendix.

And all that the vermiform appendix is good for in the present state of evolution is to get sore and have to be cut out.

The real reason why there are various denominations today is that they are more or less firmly established organizations. Their walls are built, their machinery is in place and operating, and most important of all their office force, secretaries, overseers and agents are all settled in their occupations. It would be very difficult to amalgamate and reorganize.

It is very much the same as in politics. There is no doubt that the present organization of the world into nations is not as conducive to the welfare of mankind as it would be if the world were organized as a unit. But that takes time. Organization is a matter of growth, and when you endeavor

to speed it up too rapidly you are likely to produce anarchy. That is what happened in the French Revolution, and in Russia when Czarism was changed to Bolshevism. In the endeavor to make the alteration too rapidly the organization broke down, at least for a while, and order was lost. Even so while almost everybody believes in Church unity it is found practically to be of extreme difficulty to accomplish this desired end because the habits, sentiments and interests of people have to be formed anew, and such things change slowly.

I have said that the differences between the Churches are historic and not actual. The supposed difference between the Episcopalian and Methodist Church, for instance, is a difference in views concerning the Apostolic Succession, but as a matter of fact not a handful of the members of either one of these Churches knows anything about what the Apostolic Succession means, and probably cares quite as little. The real difference between these two denominations is composed of tradition, custom, ritual, organization and sentiment. There are quite as many good Christians in one as in the other, and as far as actual life is concerned, they both believe the same things about Jesus Christ and His leadership, and they both follow the same practices.

The difference between the Baptist Church and the Presbyterian is supposed to be about the Mode of Baptism. But you would have great difficulty in finding any intelligent member of either of these denominations who honestly believes that any particular method of baptism has a vital effect upon Christian conduct or character. There is a difference between these two Churches, but it is solely a difference due to the momentum of the past.

Of course, some kind of creed is necessary. One cannot think at all without thinking something. And the necessary creed that runs through all the Churches, is that Greatest Common Divisor of belief in the leadership of Jesus and the truth of those principles taught by His lips and illustrated by His life.

I Do Not Mean the Observing of the Rules
of Any Church

"Christianity is not interested in conduct except as conduct is produced by character."

I Do Not Mean the Observing of the Rules of Any Church

WHEN I say I am a Christian I do not mean that my conduct would be approved by any Church organization. There are many things which I do habitually which they prohibit or which they frown upon. And I omit to do many things which they declare to be essential. Of course, I would not join any Church which would make me take a solemn obligation to obey their instruction; this would keep me out of some Churches, but there are others which make no such demand.

My conduct is not regulated by any Church and it never occurs to me what the Church may think of it. My conduct is regulated, first of all, by a consideration of how well it conforms to the principles of Jesus, and besides that by a sense of decency and by a lively regard for the feelings of my family, my neighbors, my fellow members in any organization to which I may belong, and my fellow men in general. I conform to most respectable customs and refrain from challenging the peculiar beliefs of those with whom I come in contact, for the simple reason that such things are not worth quarreling about, and that I prefer to reserve my protest for matters more important. I try to offend not

the people around me nor to indulge in words or actions that wound their sensibilities, except in issues that are of grave concern.

But all this, to my mind, has nothing to do with the Church nor with religion. It is simply a matter of civilization, culture and good sense. To me religion is not a matter of scrupulous regulations, but of certain broad principles, of spirit and of point of view.

I Do Not Mean That I Have a Religious Nature When I Say I Am a Christian

"Christianity is not for a chosen few. There is no kind of human nature or temperament which cannot profitably use it."

I Do Not Mean That I Have a Religious Nature When I Say I Am a Christian

WHEN I say that I am a Christian I do not wish to imply that I am particularly "holy." I am neither sanctified nor sanctimonious. As a matter of fact I am about on a level of most of the ordinary decent people I see around me, not much better and not much worse. I know very many people who are not connected with any Church at all whom I regard very highly because of their inherent nobility of character, the integrity of their conduct and the fineness of their spirit. And I know some people who are faithful adherents of the Church whom I would not trust much farther than I could see them. This does not mean that religion is of no value; what it means is that a great many people both in and out of the Church do not know what religion is.

Furthermore when I say that I am a Christian I do not imply that I have what is commonly known as "a religious nature." More accurately speaking I am not inclined to mysticism. I do not spend hours in prayer. I do not pass long periods in endeavoring to commune with God and find religious ecstasy in a union with a divine spirit; for I think I am much better engaged in trying to find

out what God wants me to do and in doing my daily task in such a way as would merit His approval. I remember there is passage in the Gospels wherein Jesus said something to the effect that at the last day there would be those who would exclaim, "Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" Whereupon the Master would answer them saying "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Depart from me, ye cursed, I never knew you."

I have had in my time, I suppose, as many visions and revelations and spiritual phases as most highly sensitive and imaginative persons. To me these form no basis for argument for calling myself a Christian. At one time or another I have been influenced to some extent by psychic impressions. I have learned to criticise them carefully and to suspect most of them. I do not believe in premonitions, nor ghosts, nor spirit messages. I do not believe in being led by the Spirit in the sense of being swayed by some mystical impulse. I know that I come of the human stock wherein credulities and superstitions have been inbred for many thousands of years, and I find many traces of these in my mind. But I consider them merely as intellec-

tual dirt, and try to sweep them out and keep my mind as clean as possible. To me superstitions and all the fears and dreads and magic that go with them have nothing whatever to do with religion, but are mainly traceable to that barbarism out of which the human race has grown.

I Do Not Mean That I Meticulously Follow the Precepts of Jesus nor Slavishly Copy His Deeds

"What I get from Jesus is the very largest freedom."

I Do Not Mean That I Meticulously Follow the Precepts of Jesus Nor Slavishly Copy His Deeds

WHAT I mean when I say that I am a Christian can probably be best expressed by that phrase that the common sense of the world quite accurately understands: I mean that I am trying to "follow" Christ. That word "follow" is a good honest word and I like its connotation. I do not mean that I meticulously imitate Him, for I do not think that any good teacher strives to produce imitation so much as enlightenment and inspiration. The teacher does not want me to go his way; he wants to show me how to go my way. Instead of saying that I act like Christ, I think I am a better disciple when I say that I act in my own way and am trying to make that a way which He would approve. There is all the difference in the world between a slavish copying and a stimulating inspiration. Somewhere Christ said that if He made men free they would be free indeed. What I get from Jesus is the very largest freedom.

It is a peculiar quality of any great master that he sets you free, that is, he stimulates and energizes your own faculties, he does not cramp your person-

ality with his own. When the young musician studies only the petty master of jazz he becomes a mere echo producing even worse jazz. When he studies Beethoven and Chopin he finds that the best in himself is brought out. I think I am put in this world to express my own life in the best possible way, and I am glad to call myself a disciple of Jesus because He helps me to do just that. He does not stifle me; He gives me the breath of life.

When I call myself a Christian I mean that I am guided by the Principles of Jesus, rather than that I follow all His precepts. By precepts I mean the particular advice and instruction He gave on special occasions. Common sense easily distinguishes these from the great general Principles which underlie His teaching and deeds as we find them recorded in the Gospels.

Christianity, to Me, Is Not a System of Totems and Taboos

"It is the totem and taboo kind of god that has made all the infidels. There are no infidels toward the god-idea which Jesus disclosed."

Christianity, to Me, Is Not a System of Totems and Taboos

I HAVE no doubt that many of my readers will think that I have little right to call myself religious at all, little claim indeed to the term Christian. From their point of view they are entirely justified in this opinion. Toward the great mass of the organized religions of the world, including a great deal of what most people take to be Christianity, I am frankly an infidel. The reason of this is that to me they are almost pure heathenism.

The difference between heathenism and wholesome religion is the difference between blind superstition and intelligent faith. The heathenisms function through fear and restraint. "Timor fecit deos." Almost all heathenisms are systems for the purpose of propitiating God. Their rites and ceremonies are for the purpose of turning away His anger. Their syllogisms and logic chopping are intended to escape His vengeance. Their sacrifices are to appease Him.

Insofar as Christianity, or any system of it, partakes of these notions it is to my mind heathenish. The reason is that I do not conceive of God as angry at all. On the contrary I think that He is well disposed toward His world, including me

and the other sinners. He loves us and operates through His universe to help along our development.

He never needed any sacrifices of bulls and rams. He was never any monster whose nostrils had to be sated with the smell of blood. All such things are related in the Old Testament because the people had as yet but an imperfect notion of their relation to the Deity. It was the business of Jesus Christ to do away with all that sort of thing and to substitute the idea of a God who did not need it.

I wish to speak very plainly about the death of Jesus and what it means to me. It is a delicate topic because on the one hand His crucifixion has been degraded to the level of a fetish by some, and by others made to be a cog in a dead syllogism, while on the other hand His death was undoubtedly of incomparable influence. To my mind St. Paul and the subsequent theologians misconstrued the great event and I do not say gave it too much importance, but gave it the wrong kind of importance, because their feet were tangled in Judaism and their minds were confused by a too great desire to be strictly logical. I cannot believe that the Creator required that His Son be tortured and killed before He forgave sinners. I cannot believe

that the Deity refuses to be friendly toward any man before that man consents to the statement of some logician. The death of Christ is significant to me, but not because He becomes a totem on a crucifix or the main convolution in the tortuous syllogism through which a soul must crawl to be saved.

At the same time I desire to be most careful not to create an impression that I minimize to any extent the grandeur of Jesus' death. It is unquestionably of farther reaching importance than any event recorded in history. The effect of it upon the life of the world has been tremendous and legitimate. His death was the epitome of His life and is a point of incomparable passion, beauty and sympathy. It showed the kind of man He was. It revealed the whole substance of His life and teaching with blinding illumination, as by a flash of lightning.

But men are saved, in my opinion, by the life of Jesus and not by His death, for death is a mere incident of life, and men are saved by Jesus, that is by the totality of the Man's deeds and words and spirit, and His death was chiefly valuable as it helps to reveal this.

The Cross of Jesus will never cease to be the sym-

bol of the highest phase of revealed divinity. My enthusiasm for and adoration of that Cross and what it stands for I think to be as profound and genuine as any man's could be. And to me such sentiment can only be real when it is freed from superstition and artificiality.

When the common man speaks of a person as religious he means (1) that he has given intellectual assent to certain statements, usually of things he knows nothing about, or (2) that he is faithful in the observance of certain rites and ceremonies, such as going to Church, kneeling in prayer, crossing himself, observing the Sabbath and the like, or (3) that he avoids certain things; as for instance, when I was a boy a good Methodist did not play cards, go to theatres, dance nor attend horse races.

Now this may seem trivial, but in reality it is the oldest religion in the world. It is the religion of taboo and totem. Thousands of years before religion had anything to do with morality it was busy enforcing the regulations concerning things sacred and things accursed. There has never been any savage tribe discovered that did not have its taboos or things forbidden, and its totems or things consecrated. And there are a great many people today whose religion consists mostly in this.

This is the essence of that Pharisaism which so bitterly opposed Jesus. On one occasion the Pharisees criticized Him because walking through the field He plucked and ate the grains of corn upon the Sabbath day. And against this tabooism he leveled His famous saying, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath."

Usually when one is said to be a "good" Catholic or a "good" Methodist or a "good" Christian it is meant that he is a strict observer of the taboos and totems rather than that he is a person of a fine and noble spirit.

To many religion is a war cry. They belong to a Church as one belongs to a political party. To them religion is about on a level with that mad and blind patriotism which is the product of the nation myth. And because this feeling is primitive, violent and easily awakened and maintained, many Church leaders encourage it.

To my mind this is not religion at all. Although it be baptized and called Christianity, although it be commended as staunch Catholicism or Methodism or Presbyterianism, it is precisely the same sort of stuff that you find among the savages of the Solomon Islands or in the heart of darkest Africa. It is fetishism pure and simple. If that is what one

means by religion then I am very glad and proud to say that I hope I have none of it. I discover traces of it sometimes in my mind, and I am most heartily ashamed.

To me Jesus Christ is no totem. The kind of God I believe in would, I think, not be pleased to have me starve myself, flog myself, emasculate myself, kneel long hours in an attitude of devotion or go through any other such performances. On the contrary He wants me to be strong and courageous, to be kind and helpful, to use all the sense I have, to be as intelligent as possible and to live as full and rich and free a life as I may be able to attain. That is the only kind of God I can use. If the totem and taboo kind of God is the true one, and I am entirely mistaken, then I want none of Him and I would a good deal rather have His condemnation than His approval. For He is not even as good a person as I am. The only kind of God I can worship is One who is infinitely better than I am.

There is one interesting phase of this thought. It is that the totem and taboo kind of god that has made all the infidels. There are no infidels toward the god-idea which Jesus disclosed. But toward the heathen god-idea, the notion that God is whim-

sical, jealous, vengeful and tyrannical, it is no wonder that men rebel. It is only because the Church has carried over all this heathenism, submerging and obscuring the pure ideals of Jesus, that it has been attacked by the Voltaires, Tom Paines and Ingersolls. If the Church would drop its heathenism its enemies would disappear.

THE REAL ESSENCE I FIND IN CHRISTIANITY

"The Church represents about the best that groping, imperfect, and stumbling mortals could do with a wonderful vision."

The Real Essence I Find in Christianity

THE essence of Christianity consists in the truth as expressed by Jesus. This is the soul of the matter. It should be sharply distinguished from the body of the matter. The body of Christianity is represented by the various organizations formed to promote it and the creeds made to formulate it. This body is imperfect. It has always changed, and will keep changing, just as our physical bodies grow and decay. But the soul lives on and is not affected by time and circumstance.

Most minds leave the track and run into the ditch because they confuse the soul of Christianity with its body. That is to say, they identify Christianity with the Church.

If Christianity is identical with the Church it has many sins to answer for and has been guilty of as many crimes and stupidities as other human organizations. The fanaticism, intolerance, tyranny, greed, contention of the various champions of Christianity have nothing at all to do with the gist or essence of Christianity, which is and always has been, pure and acceptable to every open mind.

We should keep in mind that what is known to the average man as Christianity is not Christianity at all, but a conglomerate of inherited instincts, en-

thusiasms and fears, more or less tinctured with Christianity.

The Church represents about the best that groping, imperfect and stumbling mortals could do with a wonderful vision. I think the Church is improving and is gradually ridding itself of this heathenism, but it is pretty thoroughly sooted with mediævalism yet.

And yet for all that, the force in Jesus and His astounding vision is so enormous that even what little of it the Church has retained has been sufficient to effectuate a vast deal of good.

I quote again from Havelock Ellis, whom H. L. Mencken calls "undoubtedly the most civilized Englishman living today." He shows how the pure rapture of the religious impulse is often captured and caged by the ghosts of the past:

"The burden of traditions, of conventions, of castes, has too often proved fatal alike to the manifestation of the religious impulse and the scientific impulse. It is unnecessary to point out how easily this happens in the case of the religious impulse. It is only too familiar a fact how, when the impulse of religion first germinates in the young soul, the ghouls of the Churches rush out of their caverns, seize on the unhappy victim of the divine effluence

and proceed to assure him that his rapture is, not a natural manifestation, as free as the sunlight and as gracious as the unfolding of a rose, but the manifest sign that he has been branded by a supernatural force and fettered for ever to a dead theological creed. Too often he is thus caught by the bait of his own rapture; the hook is firmly fixed in his jaw and he is drawn whither his blind guides will; his wings droop and fall away; so far as the finer issues of life are concerned, he is done for and damned."

WHAT IS THE CONVERTING FORCE OF CHRISTIANITY? WHAT CHANGES YOUR MIND?

"Christianity is not the work of persuasiveness but of greatness."

IGNATIUS.

What Is the Converting Force of Christianity? What Changes Your Mind?

WHEN you say that you have changed your mind you mean more than that you have altered your opinion or that you feel differently. You even mean more than that you have gotten to another point of view. Just what the change is I do not think I can say with accuracy, but I feel that it is more profound than any of these things.

I am not careful to give any scientific name for this because I am writing for people who wish to understand the substance of things and not to juggle with technical words.

But whatever the force may be in Christianity, it is a force that changes one's mind. It definitely adds to the push of one's growth so that he gets another outlook. It is a reconstructing force.

One of the delusions of the world is that men's minds are changed by (1) argument or proof, and (2) by fear.

But argument can only affect the intelligence, and the intellect is merely the controlling principle in one's personality. It regulates it but it does not supply power.

If you will think back over your own career you

will recall that your most important developments have come about as the result of growth and mental development and enlargement, of acquiring a clearer vision from ascending to a greater height from which you could get a better view of the landscape.

Very often you had no idea what it was that changed you, but the changes which have been most profound have been those for which you could see no apparent cause.

Change of mind because of argument or proof is very specious. When you convince a man by argument, compelling him to surrender because you can talk longer and louder than he, or because your mind dodges more alertly and he is too slow to follow you, he may say, "Very well, you are right and I am wrong. I give in." He may even go home convinced and go to bed convinced; but very probably he will come loose in the night. He will think of something he might have said but did not. He will suspect that he has been simply outmanœuvered, and will still believe that he is right after all. But if you can suggest something to him, and let him arrive at his conclusion by the process of his own reasoning and the maturity of his own thought, the change to which he will come will be

radical. He will know that he came to it of his own volition and will not suspect that he has been forced.

Jesus rarely argued. He confined himself to stating His case. "Thou hast heard that it has been said—so and so, but I say unto you—so and so." That was all there was to it. He never tried to prove it. This was not the domination of authority, but was the method of one who shrewdly knew psychological law. He knew that a suggestion is better than a proof.

The best teacher is one who is a sower going forth to sow. He plants seed. He does not fill a basket with apples nor a tank with liquid. For a mind is not a bin nor a cask. It is a growing organism.

What we need if we are to be changed or developed is to see the truth, to live with it, to try it out.

We must eat it and drink it, and have it become assimilated into our nature. So the greatest of teachers said that he was the bread, the water, and the wine of life. Amassing facts, or any other intellectual performance is no more a way to grow in the truth, than consulting a list of printed rules is the way to learn to swim. The facts have their place, and swimming instruction has its place, but

neither of them are of value except as they are wrought into life.

This is what Jesus meant when He said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a lump of leaven which a woman took and hid into three measures of meal until the whole was leavened."

All the real triumph of Christianity has been a leavening process. It has been as if it were a germ spreading and multiplying in the blood of the race. This is its irresistible power.

Jesus used another simile: "Ye are the light of the world." And the growth of Christianity has been as the slow dawning of the sunshine through the fogs of ignorance and superstition.

I like to conceive of Jesus as a rosebush planted in the garden of history, the perfume of whose bloom is permeating the thought of the world.

Ignatius expressed this truth when he wrote from Smyrna to the Christians in Rome: "Christianity is not the work of persuasiveness but of greatness."

It hardly needs proof, I think, that fear does not change men, nor hope of reward. Such motives may control their actions but cannot alter their convictions.

We should not expect the fear of Hell nor the hope of Heaven really to convert men, that is, to

change their natures, because those are the kind of motives that have an effect merely upon conduct. They do not affect character.

So have all the other potencies which men from time to time have relied upon to advance the cause of Christ. They were temporary, they were futile, many of them were positively evil, and did more harm than good. It is my conviction that all the cunning logic of the theologians, all the pomp, ritual, and display of churchly ceremonies, all the endowments of money, all the respectabilities and social patronage, all the supporters of the state, all the crusaders and the defenders of the faith, have done more toward getting in the road of the spread of Christianity than they have done toward promoting it. The real triumph of Christianity has consisted in the slow irresistible progress of truth in men's minds, and the gradual and inevitable development of humanity, that has come about because the story of Jesus has been told and His wisdom has been injected into the world.

The Converting Force of Christianity, as of anything else, is made up of (1) Suggestion and (2) Personal Influence; that is the Leavening Powers of the Truth Jesus uttered and of the Love He inspires.

What I Look for in Christianity

"It is not life insurance but education that I want."

What I Look for in Christianity

WHAT I look for in Christianity is, I think, about what the world at large looks for, and what I want, I think, is what the world wants, and by world I mean not only professing Christians but also all others.

What I seek for in an intelligent faith is not how to save my soul, but how to live my life. It is not life insurance, but education that I want. It is not to flee from the wrath to come, but to get strength to fight my battle bravely where I am placed. It is not to achieve bliss hereafter but to enable me to live a life of poise and contentment as I go along. It is not to escape the future torments of Hell, but to escape present confusion. It is how to increase and strengthen my normal desires and to develop my moral inhibitions so that I can lead a normal life. In other words, what I look for in Christianity is not how to escape from anything, but how to adjust myself to everything.

A mere philosophy is not sufficient for this purpose. I need religion. That is, I need something that co-ordinates my instincts, my emotions and my intelligence. I find a good deal of help in the words of wise men such as Benjamin Franklin, Confucius, Socrates, Emerson and others. In none of these

do I find that clear vision of the ultimate truth, that profound understanding of the nature of the human heart and of society, and that dynamic of emotion I find in Jesus.

I am not contemptuous of the long history of Christian experience. Underneath all the errors and delusions of people there has been something real. Something that has been a guidance for boys and girls in their adolescence. Something that has helped men in their adventures. Something that has stayed and comforted women in their greatest trials.

The experience of the Christians of the world has been a rich storehouse of treasure. It cannot be attributed entirely to superstition. Its effects in character and culture have been too significant and undeniable.

But to my mind all this force has flowed from the influence of the truth that was uttered by Jesus, and by His rare personality. We should discriminate between that truth and the superstitions of heathenism that have grown around it.

There came a time in my life when I was compelled to separate the wheat from the chaff, compelled to get rid of the dirt, and husks, and grit, that surrounded the pure dynamic of Jesus. I

could not, like some, reject the whole matter because it was so largely mixed with heathenism. Neither could I stomach the idea of accepting all the trash and traditional nonsense that was labeled "Christianity," and held in reverence by many professing Christians.

In other words, I could not be a professional infidel, for the simple reason that I could not resist the belief that somewhere in Christianity there is a real truth. On the other hand I could not be a conventional, professional Christian, swallowing all their catch-words whole, because if I made any such profession I would not be sincere.

Consequently, I have had to blaze the way for myself, to distinguish between what is essential and what is non-essential, what is ethical and what is merely superstitious, between that moral enthusiasm, that passion for righteousness and spiritual beauty on the one hand, and on the other that dull, driving, half savage, and wholly unintelligent sentiment which is called religion by some, but which is really only a dark fear of taboos and an equally dark confidence in totems.

Christianity in the Orient

"I do not think that the religions of the Far East will have nearly so deadly an effect when mixed with the simple truth of Jesus as did the elaborate heathenisms of the Mediterranean district."

Christianity in the Orient

I HAVE been particularly impressed with the effect produced by Christianity upon the people outside of Christendom, particularly upon the Orient. My conclusion is that if Christianity could be stripped down to its real gist, it would be eagerly accepted by the non-Christian world. The missionaries who are sent to the heathen world are successful in proportion as they forget the organization that sent them. The greatest hindrance in the road of progress to the conversion of the world to Christ, is denominationalism. It is Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Methodism, Presbyterianism, and the like that get in the road of Christianity. If the entire Christian world could have sense enough to send missionaries to heathen lands pledged to say nothing about their particular church organization, and simply to tell the story of Jesus Christ, and expound His wisdom, it would not be long before Christianity would triumph everywhere.

I am well aware that in speaking as I do about the Church I lay myself open to misunderstanding and shall probably be subjected to much bitter criticism, for to many people it is impossible to conceive of religion apart from their particular religious organization.

But I am quite willing to undergo this risk for the purpose of stating my point clearly.

Institutionalism is a complicated question. Sometimes it seems as though it is necessary to organize and propagandize in order to further the effect of the truth. And very often the organization we make in order to help the truth, hinders it in reality. And, as a matter of fact, both of these results are produced at the same time. The institution helps the truth with some and with others it hinders it. I see in my own case how both of these things have operated upon me. I have undoubtedly been greatly helped by the Church; but just as undoubtedly I have been greatly hindered by it.

The one way I can solve this riddle is to conceive of the Church as a growth. Somehow it has been necessary. In some way the truth developed an institution. But it seems to me that we are now in the process of outgrowing the institution. Perhaps we shall form new institutions. Very possibly it is too much to expect the mind of the average man to conceive of the truth apart from the institution. All I do here is to state my own position. To me, the simple, plain story of Jesus, the record of His life and teaching, has vastly more effect when taken

alone and separated entirely from the human machinery and accretions that have gathered around it.

And it is my judgment that Christianity is going to have a greater victory in the Orient than it ever had in the Occident. This will be due to the fact that it will not have to wade through the outworn controversies of the Western world. All such things reach the Orient when they are feeble and contentious, but the story of Jesus Christ, and the beauty and power of His wisdom comes to them with all the force it ever had.

One half of any idea is composed of the mind that holds it. If I tell you a blue truth and your mind is yellow, the result will be green. There is no such thing as an unmixed truth, and that is true of Christianity. At first it was taken up by the Roman world. It was mixed with the heathenism of Europe, and the result is the sort of very imperfect thing which the West calls Christianity.

But Jesus was really an Oriental, and when His gospel is mixed with the Chinese, Japanese, and Indian mind, we are going to get another color and in all probability, a better one.

I do not think that Buddhism, Confucianism, Brahminism and other Far Eastern religions will have nearly as deadly an effect upon the simple

truth of Jesus as did the elaborate heathenisms of the Mediterranean district which almost extinguished the pure light of Jesus' message.

I agree with what Alfred E. Zimmern says:

"It may, indeed, well be that Asia and Africa, free to use the results of our Western inquiries without the encumbrance of our traditions, will give us startling lessons both in the apprehension of Jesus and in the dynamic power of Christianity. However that may be, we of the West are the heirs of our own past, and, burdened as we are with a legacy of wrong thinking and false sentiment, we must needs begin by deliberately clearing away this debris."

WHY I BELONG TO A CHURCH

"If the Church were perfect I do not think I should want to belong to it, for I hardly consider myself fit to associate with perfect people, and I should certainly be uncomfortable."

Why I Belong to a Church

PERHAPS the most inevitable question that my readers may ask me is, What is your relation to the Church? I have pointed out many of the Church's mistakes and have been sometimes severe in my criticisms of it and have emphasized a good deal my own independence. The query naturally arises then, do I belong to a Church and if so, why? And what Church do I belong to?

Let me answer the last question first. I shall not state here the particular denomination to which I belong. This is not because I am ashamed of it, but for the reason that I know human nature pretty well, and the moment that the average reader finds out whether I am a Presbyterian, a Roman Catholic, a Christian Scientist, or this or that, that moment he would label me and chuck me into a pigeon hole, and from that on consider me as speaking for a Class, and not as an individual human soul. He would assume that I believe all the things that he thinks that Class believes.

Suffice it to say, therefore, that I am a member of one of the established branches of the Church of Jesus Christ, and what I write here might be written as coming from a member of any one of these denominations as well as from another.

I shall treat the question from my personal viewpoint only. I shall not endeavor to defend the Church as a necessary institution, but shall state only why I need it, why I like it, and how it is of use to me.

I belong to the Church, but not because it is perfect. It is not. In fact if it were perfect I do not think I should want to belong to it, for I hardly consider myself fit to associate with perfect people, and I should certainly be uncomfortable. The Church is imperfect because it is human. While it may have been founded by a superhuman agent, as some claim, it certainly has been managed and has reached its present form by the instrumentality of human beings. When I say I belong to a Church, that does not imply that I do not see its faults and criticize them. A wife may belong to her husband and be very loving and true to him, but that rarely prevents her from pointing out his errors. I belong to my country, but I think I am all the better citizen and patriot when I protest against the things that its rulers and lawmakers do which seem to me to be wrong. Belonging to an institution does not imply that one thinks that whatever the institution may do is right; it implies only that on the whole he thinks that his life counts more and that he does

his duty better by being a member of it than by remaining an outsider.

What, then, are the reasons why I belong to the Church?

The first reason of all, perhaps, is that it is an institution organized to disseminate those ideas and to establish those principles which are the most important in the world. I know of no Christian Church that does not stand for righteousness, for order, for the worship of God and for the exercise of the general principles of Jesus Christ. Instead of waiting till I find some Church whose creed I can entirely accept and whose regulations and ceremonies suit me, I can drop into the first Church that I come to and find there a group of human beings who are trying to find out and to practice what is right, and to discover and avoid what is wrong, and that I consider to be the most vital quest of the world. If I am never going to have a family until I find a group of people who live exactly according to my notions, if I am never going to belong to a country except one that is ruled with absolute justice, and if I am never going to have any friends except those of absolute sympathy and understanding, I might as well go at once and jump in the lake. This world is no place for me.

Another reason why I belong to the Church is that I like it. I like the kind of people that go to Church. Of course they are faulty as all human beings are faulty. Some of them are disagreeable. But on the whole they are not vicious, cruel, profligate nor idle. There may be some bad people in the Church, but the great mass of crooks, perverts and lawbreakers, also the majority of cynics, pessimists and intellectual mountebanks, are outside of the Church. There may be some intolerance and pharisaism among people who call themselves Christians, in fact I have found quite a deal, but I have found a thousand times more intolerance, provincialism and malice among the crowd of wild creatures that gather in the jungle outside the Church and bark at its lighted windows.

In choosing which group one should belong to he must consider the question of averages and not of individuals, he must stick to the generalities and not be deceived in his judgment by specious reasoning from single instances. Some deacons put sand in the sugar, and some infidels have been very noble minded and kind, but the fact remains that the chances are much greater, if you are looking for a noble minded person, that you will find him in the Christian Church, and if you are looking for cheats

and rascals that you will find them in the back room of a grog shop.

Another reason why I like the Church is that it is the oldest institution in the world, and there is a charm about old things that no new thing can have. I like a rock to be overgrown with moss, and I like the pieties and myths that gather about an ancient tradition. Most of us are thus peculiarly affected by the spell of antiquity. We get a thrill from the broken arches of the Forum and the stained and rugged stones of the Cathedral of Chartres that the gaudiest and newest gingerbread palace on Fifth Avenue cannot produce.

When I say that the Church is the oldest existing institution I do not mean my particular denomination, not the Church of Rome, nor the Mahometan mosque, nor the Buddhist temple, but I mean that greater institution of which all these are but varied phases. By the Church I mean, in this connection, that group of human beings that gathers statedly for the purpose of thinking about God, the life beyond, duty and the undying question of what is right and what is wrong. My little Church today is one of a long procession of institutions built around the same idea, a procession that winds its way back through the middle ages,

through the eras of Greece and Egypt and Babylon, wherever you find mankind emerging into civilization, a procession whose altar fires you may see through history as a row of street lamps extending into the past until the line is lost in the gray mists that enshroud the dawn of the human race. When I go to Church I feel that I come in touch with this most venerable, most imposing and most beautiful of all the institutions of humanity.

I belong to the Church because it seems to me that it, as an institution, is keeping alive the forces most needed for human progress. The Church is undoubtedly the source from which flow the streams of the most wholesome public opinion among men. It is in the Church that we must seek the origin of every great movement for human welfare; for it was the Church and its insistent preachment of brotherhood which gave strength to those who battered down the institution of human slavery; it was the Church that dared to resist the tremendous momentum of tradition, the arrows of ridicule and the poison gas of false reasoning, and outlaw the liquor traffic; it was the Church that was the father of the public school and the university; and if war, that sum of all villainies, that last lord lieutenant of hell to hold his glittering court upon earth, that

most noxious of all the holdovers of man's past ignorance and cruelty, if war itself shall ever be done away with it will be because of the sentiment against it inspired by the Christian Church.

I value the Church not so much because of what it does directly, not so much because of its immediate regulation of conduct nor its gifts to charity, as because it keeps alive by its ritual, its prayer and song and preachment, imperfectly doubtless but doubtless also factually, the teachings, the principles and the personal influence of Jesus Christ.

These are some of the reasons why, although I may criticize the Church, I belong to it, I love it and I expect to remain a member of it so long as I can find any branch of it that will accept me.

POSTLUDE

"It is I, be not afraid . . ."

"Who is this that cometh up out of Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah?"

ISAIAH.

"It Is I, Be Not Afraid"

FOR nobody knows how many thousand or million years the race of man has inhabited the planet.

Ever since the human animal stood up and began to think he has suspected another Thinker in the universe.

Living amidst constant dangers, as all life implies danger, and his, being the highest form of life, meant the most complicated dangers, he early got the idea that the Other Thinker was hostile to him.

He also supposed that being mysterious, unknown and unvocal, this Other Thinker was superior. He must be immensely clever to hide so well.

Hence his first religion was one of placation. Altar fires gleam farther in the past than the remotest history. He killed the first of his flocks to appease the dimly guessed wrath of this Unseen Enemy.

He invented all sorts of rites and ceremonies, the object of which was to avert the displeasure of this Other One. This ritual persists to this day.

He dodged this Other One all his life, yet he knew that it was a losing game always, and at last the Great Enemy would get him.

Hence life was essentially a tragedy. All the great literature of the past has been tragic.

History has been the record of the slow conquest, one by one, of the dreads of the Unknown.

Fire was first known from volcanoes, whose rumblings were the muttered anger, whose fearful lava was the eructation, of the Sullen One.

By and by man learned to make Fire himself, from flint, from wood, from chemicals, and his chiliads of progress have but marked his progress from trembling before the Volcano to cooking his pancakes over the kitchen stove.

Electricity boomed in the thunder and its bolt rove his roof-tree and massacred his children; and he learned at last to use this strange power of that Other One, and carry his voice across continents and oceans with this power, to lift his loads and light his streets and houses, to do innumerable menialities.

That Other One dwelt in the dim seas, and frightened all navigators, until Columbus.

It was that Other One who made all forests fearsome, and caused the terror of the "bois sacré."

Fear multiplied His minions. Under Him, and actuated by His same spite toward human happi-

ness, were countless witches, demons, imps, sprites, fauns, dryads, leprechauns, gnomes and elves.

The path of man, from his mother's breast to the breast of earth, was one zigzag way of side-stepping the great Detective who was after him, and whose relentless pursuit no son of man had ever been able to escape.

He pulled down monarchs from their throne, unseated conquerors in full cry of victory, snatched the laughing baby from its father's hand, tore the bridegroom ruthlessly from his beloved's side, and now and again let loose His bloodhounds and slew the hated human race in war by hundreds and by thousands.

No wonder it were well to propitiate Him, to spend one's whole life in mortification and prayer to avert His wrath, to prostitute one's mind to believe the most childish credulities, to give assent to ferocious creeds—to do anything that might turn aside so vindictive and so powerful a Being.

And then, one day, He appeared. And He was so strange that men could not believe Him. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

Even when He had passed, men proceeded to

build elaborate heathenisms around His memory, and made His following hard and horrible.

For the simplicity of His message was beyond all credence, and insulted the traditions of ten thousand years.

For when that Other One came, He only went about doing good, took little children in His lap and blessed them, healed the sick, spoke peaceably to the troubled, made the blind to see, and spoke such gentle words of wisdom that the whole earth trembled.

All He said, when He showed His face, all that Other One said, Whom Humanity had feared so many centuries, was this shattering word:

"It is I. Be not afraid!"

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Why I am a Christian

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